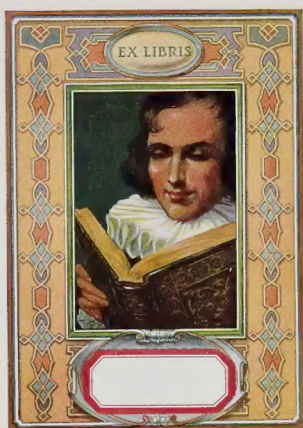


A HISTORY
OF ITALIAN
FURNITURE

WILLIAM M. ODOM



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ITALIAN FURNITURE

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PRESERVATION OF THE FINEST
EXAMPLES OF ITALIAN
FURNITURE

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A HISTORY OF
ITALIAN FURNITURE

CHAPTER I

ITALIAN GOTHIC

THE FOURTEENTH AND EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

MEDIEVAL Italy, existing in the midst of many potent influences, and surrounded by the ruins of her past culture, adopted Gothic art in the thirteenth century. With it she combined her then-flourishing Lombard, Tuscan Romanesque, and Byzantine styles into a fabric that, if falling far below the standard of the organic unity of northern work, excels in the beauty and charm of its subordinate parts. Structural invention was not a gift of these otherwise richly endowed people and the expression falls into a style balancing

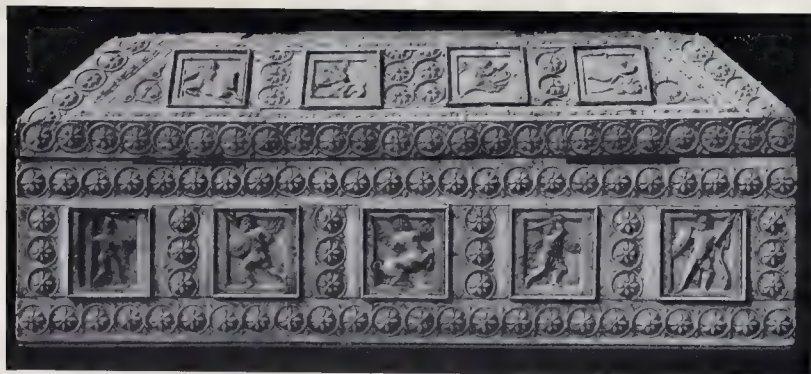


FIG. I. IVORY COFANETTO. XII CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE

the romantic and intellectual factors that may be termed pointed Romanesque of refined character, rather than Gothic, in the sense of the north.¹

Northern Europe had given a well-formulated expression to Gothic art before the Italians accepted it, but when the flamboyant style of the late

¹The Gothic style was introduced into Italy through the propaganda of the Cistercian monks. By the close of the twelfth century this order was settling in various parts of the peninsula where it began to erect churches evincing the influence of the pointed style of Burgundy whence the order came.

ITALIAN FURNITURE

fifteenth century was revelling in its most intricate fancies, the Italians had totally abandoned it in their enthusiastic desire for antique culture. During the short period of its adoption it was always under that dominating influence, inbred of classic tradition, that prevented the Italian genius from comprehending the organic structure of the true Northern style. Classic art is an heritage of the Italians that has coloured all their artistic activities. The early Christians employed architectural members and fragments from the classic ruins of Rome in constructing their early Basilicas, and all through the Romanesque and Byzantine styles this classic tradition is apparent. The Gothic idea, that was so spontaneous and natural to the feudal people of the North, was never a congenial or symbolic expression of the civic and intellectual liberty of the Italian free town and commune. Yet a style clearly showing the struggle of these two elements for mastery, perhaps best depicted in the work of Pisano's pulpit for the Baptistry at Pisa, a masterpiece of Gothic form and Renaissance sculpture, was characteristic of the artistic expression of the Italians during the greater part of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

At the height of the conflict between the native Italian and the Northern styles, the great architect, Arnolfo Cambio (1232-1301), the designer of the church of Santa Croce and the Palazzo Vecchio, as well as the author of the first plans for the Cathedral at Florence, gave a more definite form to the architecture of Tuscany, that may be termed Tuscan Gothic.¹ This style in modified form was the prevailing mode of architecture in central Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, adapting itself to the local materials. It not only found expression in ecclesiastical work, but developed a domestic style in the beginning of the fourteenth century in the service of a society rapidly becoming more luxurious and intellectual, that was generally more palatial than it was in the northern countries. In Lombardy, Venice, and Sicily,²

¹The Bargello at Florence, begun about 1250, is a noble example of a castellated palace showing the local Romanesque modified by Gothic detail.

²In Sicily, as early as the twelfth century, rose a school of decoration that contributed to the art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is recorded that Roger of Sicily built a palace in the Saracen style having interiors panelled in cream marble adorned with mosaics picturing green trees and blue peacocks. Though the influence of the antique was evident in the sculpture at an extraordinarily early date, the influence of the Byzantine, Lombard, and Northern Gothic styles prevailed from the twelfth century up to the time of the Renaissance. The mosaics here are especially important.

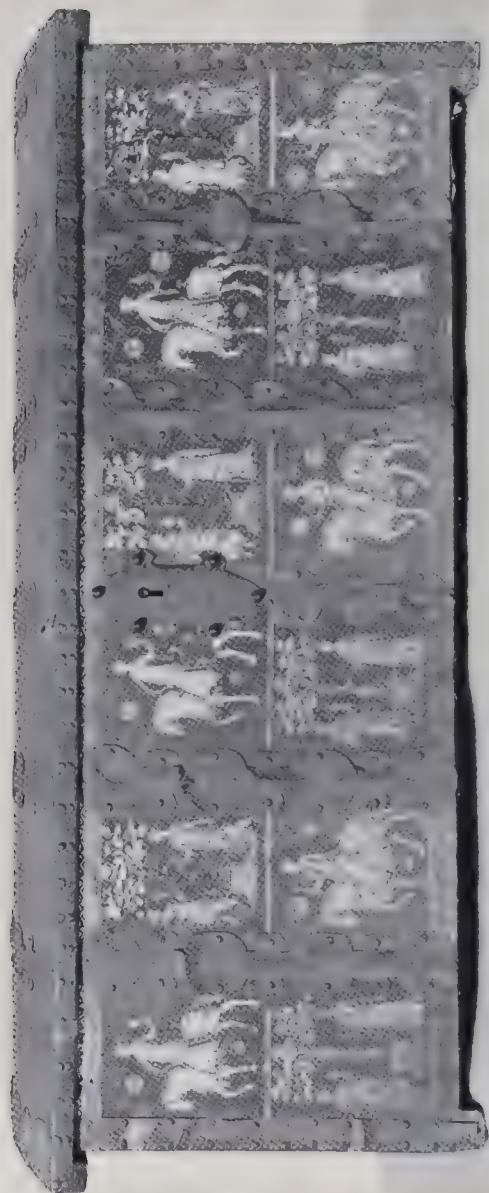


FIG. 2. CASSONE WITH PAINTED AND PASTICLIA DECORATIONS. FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1400
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

ITALIAN FURNITURE

a style embodying the same conceptions and showing the same misapprehension of the true Gothic character reached a state of highly interesting development, marked in each section by its local colour.

The social and political life of the democratic commune and free town of Italy enjoyed an intellectual liberty that encouraged individuality of expression. The northern aristocracies, shut up in their strong fortresses, knew little of the domestic refinement and comfort of the Italian patrician, who as early as the fourteenth century devoted time to artistic and intellectual pursuits. The extensive trade of the Italians, a deadly foe of feudalism, brought wealth which soon encouraged a leisure that naturally led to luxury.

The thirteenth century was an age of extreme simplicity. The houses, dress, and manner of the people were generally crude and simple. A contemporary of Dante gives us a picture of the development of Italian social life from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century: "In the thirteenth century," he writes, "the manners of Italians were rude. A man and his wife ate off the same plate. There were no wooden-handled knives—nor more than one or two drinking cups in a house. Candles of wax or tallow were unknown—a servant held a torch during supper. The clothes of men were of leather, unlined; scarcely any gold or silver was seen on their dress. The portions of women were small, and their dress, even after marriage, was simple. The pride of man was to be well provided with arms and horses; that of nobility to have lofty towers, of which all the cities in Italy were full. But now (the early fourteenth century) frugality has been changed for sumptuousness; everything exquisite is sought after in dress,—gold, silver, pearls, silks, and rich furs. Even foreign wines and rich meats are required."¹ John de Mussis in his "*Chronicon Placentinum*," written about 1388, laments in the tone of the modern moralist the increasing luxury of his day. He writes that "Now the old customs are superseded by many indecorous usages, but especially for the destruction of souls parsimony has been changed for luxury. Clothes are seen of exquisite materials and workmanship, and ornamented to excess. We have silver and gold and pearls in cunning devices; fringes of wonderful breadth, linings of

¹Hallam's "*State of Europe*," Vol. II, part II, chap. IX.



FIG. 3. CASSONE WITH PAINTED DECORATIONS. FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1400
FROM THE CASTELLO DI VINCIGLIATA, NEAR FLORENCE

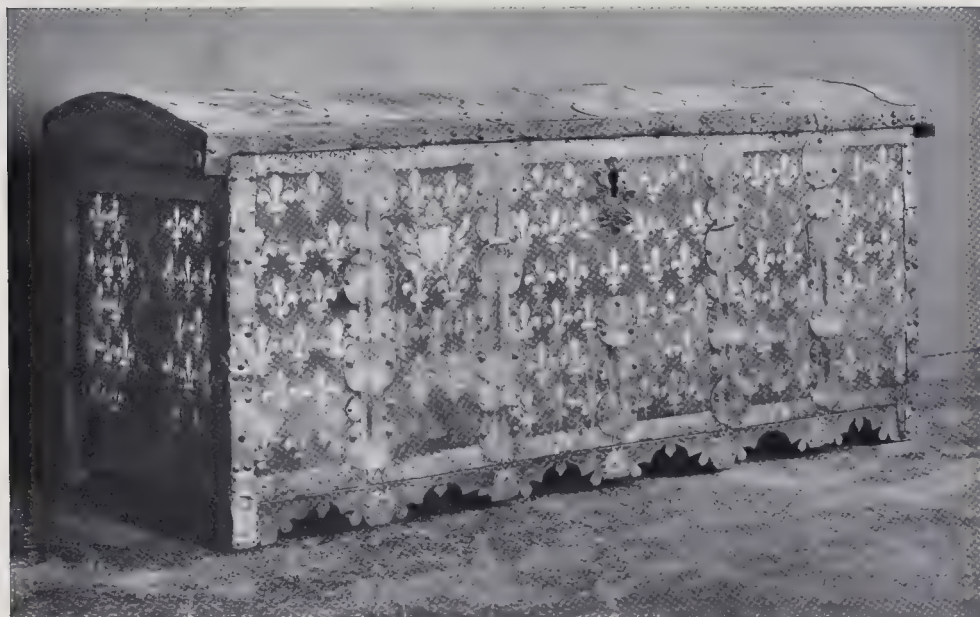


FIG. 4. CASSONE WITH PAINTED AND PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1400
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

silk varied with foreign and costly furs. Our ladies wear long and large robes of crimson silk velvet, or of cloth of silk brocaded with gold, and every lady has trinkets of gold and precious stones to the value of from thirty to fifty golden florins."

It is claimed that furniture design is affected by contemporary costumes. If this can be taken as an indication we may infer that the cassoni with painted and gilded pastiglia decorations and other Gothic furnishings were richer and more numerous than are accredited to that period to-day, and perhaps the most beautiful examples have not survived from those times of peril and strife. Vasari says: "At that time it was the custom of the people to have in their chambers great wooden chests of various forms, and every one used to have them painted with stories from the myths of Ovid and other poets, or hunting scenes or jousts, or tales of love according to the taste of each one. And in the same way were painted the beds and chairs and other furniture of the rooms."

The great plagues of the middle of the fourteenth century, which depleted the population of many of the principal cities, the trials of the condottieri, together with the depressing rule of the despots, turned the people's thoughts again to the Church, and with the return of the popes from Avignon in 1377¹ a new impetus was given to an ecclesiastical expression that was to vie with the doctrines of the great humanist forerunners, then beginning to make their impress on the Italian mind. In the arts, the humanist influence is evident in sculpture and literature, but it was not until the fifteenth century that the influence of the classic revival was apparent in architecture and in furniture design.

Florence, even in medieval times, acclaimed her supremacy in the arts. Her architecture, as early as the Romanesque period, has a character of balanced reasonableness, and, as Vasari noticed, has none of the Lombard savagery. The old Florentine historian, Villani, gives us a picturesque account of the prosperity, tranquillity, and refinement of Florentine life as early

¹After their return there was the "great schism" of forty years that divided Europe. At one time three popes were claiming power until the Council at Constance, 1414, deposed all three and elected a Colonna, —Martin V, 1417-31—who restored unity.



FIG. 5. CASSONE WITH PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS IN GOLD AND COLOUR. SIENESE, LATE XIV CENTURY
FROM THE HARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

as the year 1283 when, as he writes: "In June, at the feast of St. John, in the quarter across the Arno, where the Rossi and their neighbours were the principal people, the nobility and the rich organized themselves into a company, and adopted a dress all white, and chose a master called the Lord of Love. The object of the company was to have feasts, games, and dances



FIG. 6. COFFER WITH PAINTED PANELS AND GILDED PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS
SIENESE, ABOUT 1380
FROM A SIENESE COLLECTION

for the ladies and gentlemen of the city and other people of quality. They used to parade the town with trumpets and other musical instruments, and had great dinners and suppers and all kinds of jollity. The festivities lasted nearly two months, and were the finest and most celebrated that were ever held in Florence or all Tuscany. Gentlemen and troubadours came from far and near, and all were received and entertained with distinction. And it is worth remembering that the city and its citizens were better off then than they had ever been, and this prosperity continued till the division into Burghers and Grandi. There were then in Florence three hundred knights,

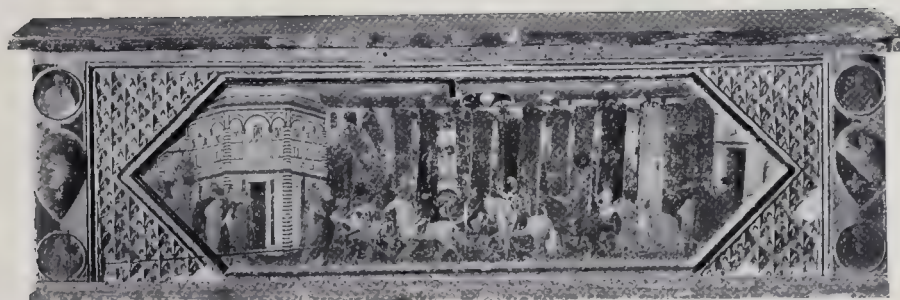


FIG. 7. CASSONE WITH PAINTED PANEL AND PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. FLORENTINE, END OF THE
XIV CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE



FIG. 8. CASSONE WITH PAINTED PANELS AND PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. FLORENTINE,
LATE XIV CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

and there were many companies of gentlemen and ladies, who morning and evening kept open table richly spread, and had buffoons in attendance, so, from Lombardy and all Italy, jesters, players, and jugglers came to Florence, and all were welcome, and whenever a stranger of distinction passed through the city there was rivalry between the companies to get him as their guest."¹

In the early fourteenth century, in spite of the devastating plagues and the continuous struggle between the Grandi and the Borghesi, Florence was still so rich and prosperous and her luxury reached such a degree of extravagance as to necessitate the creation of laws regulating the dress of both fashionable and simple people. It was during this period that Giotto reared his beautiful tower of coloured marbles and many of her still-existing Gothic palaces were built² as well as those villas which Villani informs us were, at that early age, more beautiful than the town palaces.

Venice, a republic, ruled by an oligarchy of nobles, rose to the height of her power in the first years of the fifteenth century. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries her governing classes were very wealthy and lived magnificently in fanciful Gothic palaces, of which the Palazzi dell' Ambasciatore, Cavalli, and Ca' d'Oro give some idea of their splendour. After the Crusades a great change was wrought in primitive manners, domestic life developed and the furnishing of the house was much improved. The houses of the nobility prove that a certain refinement and elegance had already come into vogue and the internal decoration of the chambers was no less graceful than the design of the façade.³

From the fragmentary remains of the decorative arts and the gossip of the old chroniclers we can construct pictures of the early Venetian interior. Lionardo di Nicolo Frescobaldi, a Florentine, writes that he was invited to the house of Remigio Soranza to supper on an evening in August, 1384. He remarks that the house "seemed all of gold; there were many chambers which were simply one mass of gold and ultramarine." It is also recorded that

¹A translation from Sedgwick's "A Short History of Italy."

²The Pal. Salimbeni, Spini, and Davanzati are surviving examples of the period.

³Molmenti.



FIG. 9. CASSONE WITH PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS IN GOLD AND COLOUR. FLORENTINE, EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON



FIG. 10. PASTIGLIA PANEL FROM A FLORENTINE CASSONE. EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON



FIG. II. CASSONE WITH PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. ABOUT 1400
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON



FIG. 12. SIENESE CASSONE WITH GILDED PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. ABOUT 1400
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

Peter, son of the King of Portugal, while on a visit to Venice in 1425, said that the houses of the nobles "were not private houses, but palaces of princes and crowned heads." Art was applied to the adornment of the life of private citizens as well. "They gradually began to collect antiquities and objects of artistic value and to turn their attention to the decoration of their houses." From an inventory compiled in 1335 we learn that the notary Oliviero Forzetta was the possessor of a veritable museum. Goldsmiths' work, pictures on panels, drawings, fragments of antique sculpture, medals, and books of philosophy and literature were recorded. Giovanni Villani tells us that chimney pieces were both numerous and beautiful in pre-Renaissance Venice, their hoods being adorned with painting and sculpture. As early as 1355 an apartment in the Ducal Palace is spoken of as the "*Sala Camminosum*", implying that chimney pieces were then in use, while in the house of Doge Faliero a room, in which his library and antiquities were arranged, was designated as the "*Camera Rossa*", evidently thus distinguished by the colour of its decorations or hangings, giving us an indication of the thought that was bestowed on the decorations of the important interiors of that early age.

Although the Duchy of Milan, under the rule of Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1378-1402), had conquered nearly all of northern Italy,¹ laid the foundation of the Cathedral at Milan, begun the Certosa at Pavia, and completed the great Castello at Pavia, the social and domestic life of this section was as a whole far more primitive and less affected by artistic standards than that of Florence and Venice. The Duchy of Milan, a despotic and tyrannical form of government, like that of the feudalistic civilizations of the north, did not encourage a diffusion of social and domestic refinement. Though the pageantry of life was no doubt used as an asset of power by all medieval as well as Renaissance despots, it was, by its concentration here brought out in the greatest contrast. The Castello at Pavia, said to be the grandest royal house of medieval Europe, was reared by successive generations of

¹Vicenza, Verona, Padua, Siena, Perugia, and Bologna had been conquered and annexed by him. He aspired to a kingdom of Italy, but this plan was defeated by the Venetians and the Florentines.

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the Visconti, as is evinced by the long low Romanesque colonnades and arches of the first Visconti age, and the Gothic windows of the banqueting hall, as well as those of the upper stories with slender marble shafts and terra cotta mouldings built by Gian Galeazzo. The vaulted halls are said to have once been gay with ultramarine and gold, the arms of the Visconti and Sforza, the red cross of Savoy, and the lilies of France. The vast "Sala della Palla", decorated with frescos picturing hunting and fishing scenes, was where the courtiers indulged in "pall mall", the classic game of the Renaissance.

Next to Venice, Siena is perhaps the richest in palaces of this period, from which come some of the finest existing examples of Gothic furniture.¹ Siena shows signs of a highly developed social life at an astonishingly early age. In the thirteenth century, in spite of her civil strife and internal jealousies, she reached the height of her prosperity. Her civic pride was manifested in her paved and cleanly kept streets, her beautiful public buildings and her university. Her burgher class rose to power, generalizing the advancement of domestic refinement, while her guilds of artists and artisans were ornamenting the artistic expression of her social, as well as her religious and civic life.

Contemporaneous is the golden age of Perugia. Throughout Umbria the Gothic style manifested itself more truly. The church of S. Francesco at Assisi, begun in the year 1228, the most complete acceptance of the new style, undoubtedly had its effect upon the contemporary building activities of Umbria. There is also important work to be found at Mantua, Ferrara, and Vicenza,² other centres of highly developed pre-Renaissance civilizations. But Rome—with the Papacy away at Avignon and the "great schism" of forty years after its return, the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily in a turbulent state, Genoa a maritime oligarchy and pirate, and Savoy shut up in a feudalistic mode of living—could have taken but little part in the development of the arts that encouraged a more graceful and artistic manner of living.

¹In Siena the Pal. Tolomei, Saracini, Salimbeni, Grottanelli, and Buonsignori are among those reared in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

²The Pal. Thiene and the Pal. Braschi of the fourteenth century.



FIG. 13. CASSONE WITH PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. SIENESE, END OF THE XIV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 14. UMBRIAN CHEST WITH CARVED AND INTARSIA DECORATIONS. ABOUT 1400
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 15. CHEST WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. URBINO, EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 16. CARVED WOOD WALNUT CHEST. VAL D'AOSTA, FIRST HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE TOLENTINO GALLERIES OF ROME AND NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 17. END OF FIG. 16

ITALIAN FURNITURE

An amazing number of Gothic palaces of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries still survive, but unfortunately no interiors remain with their furnishings intact. A few examples of accurate restorations, such as those in the Scala castle at Soave, are of great value to the student. Here the guard room has been restored, with its crude tables and guards' beds, as in the days of Can Grande.¹ Reached by picturesque outer stairs are several other apartments with restored decorations and furnishings, among which is a bedroom with a canopied bed, tables, chairs, and decorative wrought-iron stands. In the dining room the table has been set with decorative majolica dishes, crude forks and spoons, earthenware pitchers and a partly opaque glass of a lovely blue. The decorations of the walls are restored in the Quattrocento style. Still, in many of the surviving Gothic palaces scattered throughout the peninsula, are isolated examples of original ceilings, both carved and painted, carved stone chimney pieces, and doorways, an occasional intarsia door and a painted wall decoration. An apartment in an old palace at Verona is fortunate in retaining its exquisite carved wood ceiling and finely carved vertical wall beams, rare even in those days, while Sig. Bardini has preserved in his villa near Florence several painted ceilings, carved stone doorways and chimney pieces, painted wall decorations and a stately old stairway of stone, all of which he has skillfully removed from demolished Gothic structures.

The general interior of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century palace, compared with that of the Renaissance and Baroque times, was, except in rare instances, severely bare and ascetic. Furnishings were few and simple and generally crude. The principal apartment—the living room, with its rough plaster and stone walls, its beamed ceilings, sometimes painted with primitive decorations, its tiled floors, and monumental hooded chimney pieces—contained most of the articles of medieval furniture, which consisted of the cassone; a few chairs, benches, and stools; sometimes a long table, and occasionally a

¹Can Grande of Verona has been called one of the most attractive of Italian despots of this period. He is distinguished by the splendours of his brilliant court, where at one time over twenty exiled Ghibelline princes took refuge. Throngs of painters, sculptors, scholars, poets, and musicians—including Dante, who gave him a place in the seventeenth canto of *Paradiso*—found there a generous hospitality. He died in 1329. Verona fell to the Visconti in 1387.



FIG. 18. VENETIAN CARVED WOOD CHEST. EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

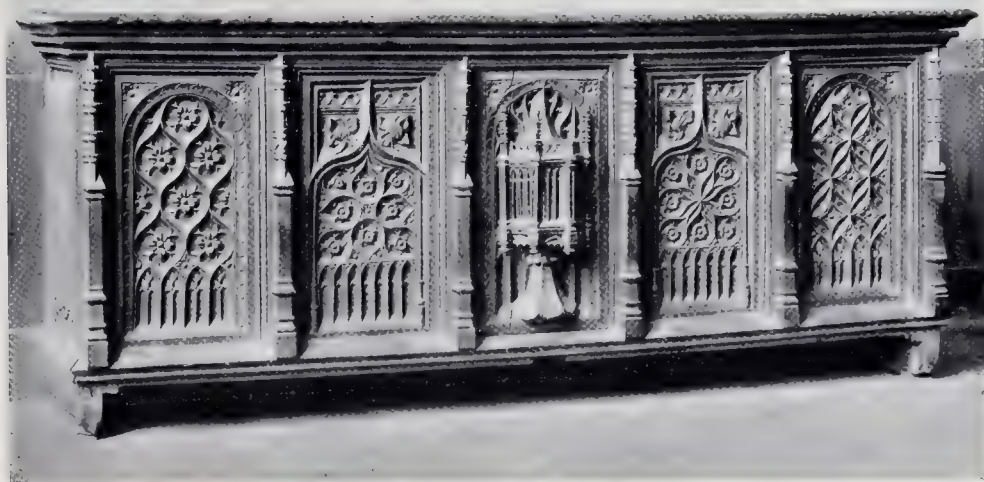


FIG. 19. CARVED WOOD CHEST. NORTHERN ITALY, FIRST HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

cupboard. With the exception of a few beds, little is known about the furnishings of the other apartments beyond what can be learned from a few contemporary pictures and woodcuts.

Though generally crude the interiors of this period are highly colourful. Walls of the principal apartments were often entirely covered with tempera frescos depicting hangings with all-over geometrical diaper patterns, or patterned over with conventional flower and foliage, with rich borders at the top and bottom. These were painted to appear as though they were hung straight or else dropped pendant from regular points forming a festoon-like drapery.¹ It is claimed that in some houses of the wealthier class actual hangings were used, woven in designs similar to these painted decorations.²

A painted wall decoration, removed from the Mercato Vecchio at Florence to the Villa Bardini just outside that city, has a frieze formed of the heads of a cusped arcade below which is suspended a diapered stuff in broad folds. Through the arches of the frieze can be seen olive and orange trees, giving the effect of a loggia enclosed with hangings. During the restoration of the Palazzo Davanzati painted walls of this description were found in several of the apartments under layers of modern plaster and wall papers. As in nearly all instances, these decorations were crowned with elaborate painted friezes, and were found associated with beamed and raftered ceilings ornamented with gay pattern work of chevrons, chequers, bands of quatrefoils, and other abstract motifs, in which reds, blues, and greens of normal values and intensities were combined with an effective area of black and white.³ Though the vaulted ceiling, embellished with frescos, is generally met with in ecclesiastical work, it was occasionally found in apartments on the ground floor of the palace. In the houses of merchants these apartments were generally used for trade, while those above were reserved for the family. All important palaces had courtyards with arcades and stately stairs and in the centre stood the sculptured wellhead.

¹See Lethaby's "Mediaeval Art," p. 294.

²"Italian wall decorations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." Victoria and Albert Museum Art Hand Book.

³Original wall paintings of this character are to be found in the Bargello, Florence; Castello di Vincigliata, near Florence, and the Council Chamber at S. Marino.



FIG. 20. CHEST WITH CARVED AND INTARSIA DECORATIONS, WALNUT AND GOLD. SIENESE, EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

Of the furniture in the medieval interior, the cassone¹ was of the greatest importance. The large number still surviving attest the popularity of this form of furnishing which fulfilled so many functions. They were used principally for storing wearing apparel and valuables, and not infrequently for transporting these possessions on journeys,² while with the addition of soft cushions

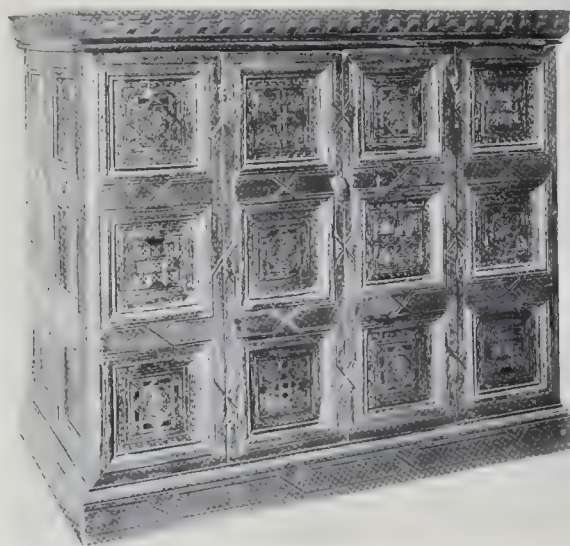


FIG. 21. SACRISTY CUPBOARD WITH DOORS. INTARSIA DECORATIONS. LOMBARD OR VENETIAN, EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

they were often used for seats and even at times for beds. It was not uncommon to find ten or more belonging to a household and from some of the old inventories we learn that fifty or more were included among the possessions of a patrician family. At least one was found in every apartment, while in some of the old pictures they are seen placed at the foot of the bed and occasionally at the side as well.

¹In many of the old inventories they are spoken of as "forziere."

²Distinguished people travelled with at least ten, while as many as a hundred are known to have been carried in the trains of the magnificent princes.



FIG. 22. SACRISTY CUPBOARD. PERUGIA, ABOUT 1400
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 23. UMBRIAN CHEST. ABOUT 1400
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 24. PANELLING FROM THE CASTELLO DI TORCHIA, NEAR PARMA. FIRST HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE PERUZZI DE' MEDICI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

The Italian cassone differs widely from the northern Gothic chest both in form and decoration. Northern specimens are more vertical and are invariably richly carved with characteristic Gothic tracery in a composition of decidedly vertical character, while the Italian examples generally have painted, inlaid, or pastiglia enrichments of more geometrical character that display a more horizontal composition. Most of those surviving from the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries show a great

variety in decorative treatment. The earliest and finest examples were embellished with pastiglia work, a kind of plaster composition in low relief that was generally gilded and occasionally painted, or with painted panels inserted in rich frames of the same composition. Except in Venice and in some of the extreme northern provinces carved wood cassoni of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are very rare, inlay or intarsia being generally preferred to enrich the surfaces of the finer examples. The fronts of all medieval chests show the most important decorations, the ends and tops in most instances being treated in a simple, decorative manner.

In form and ornamentation the ivory Byzantine cofanetto illustrated in Figure 1 is a model for many of the cassoni of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The manner in which the decoration is enclosed in rectangular forms framed with bands of running ornament became a favourite Gothic composition of the Italians.

Figure 2, a late fourteenth century cassone with painted decoration of beautiful Gothic design, is reinforced with ornamental metal bands in a char-

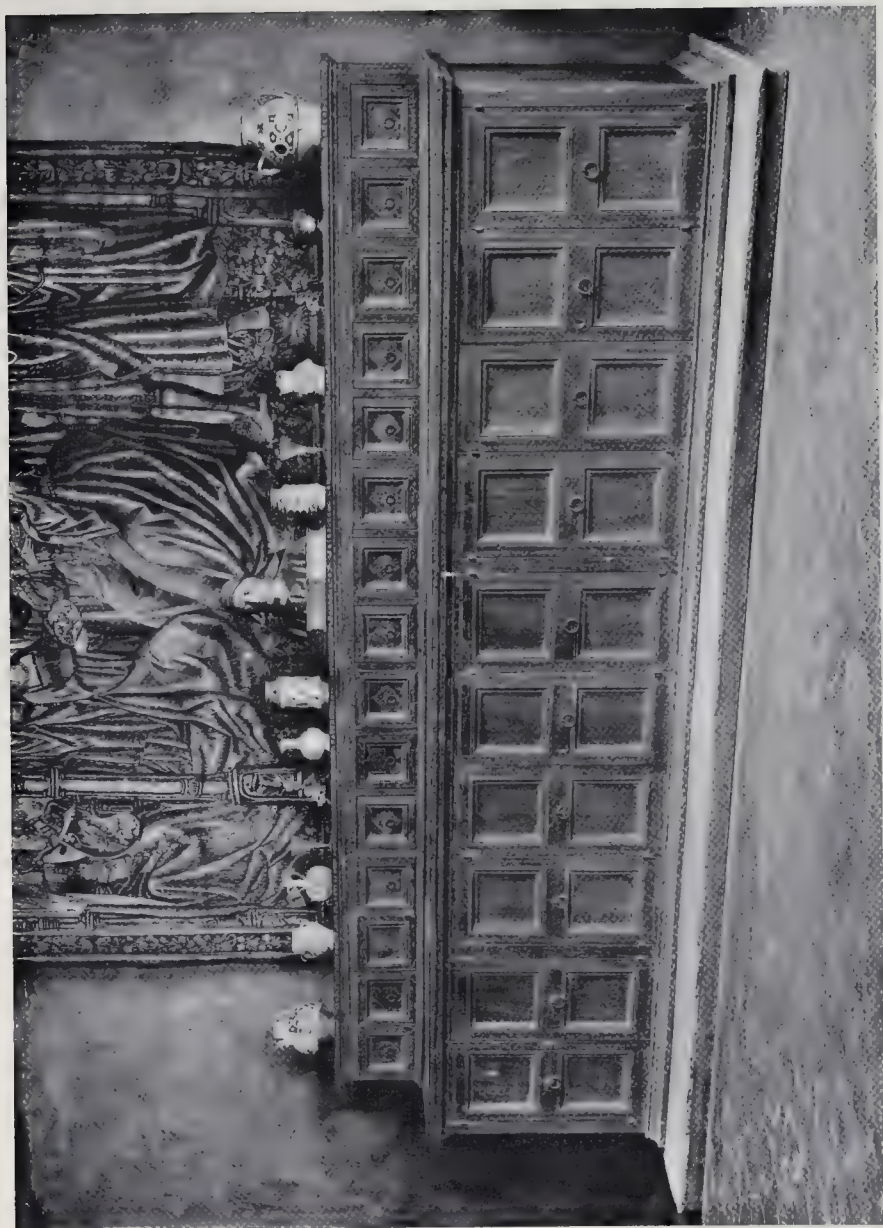


FIG. 25. SACRISTY CUPBOARD WITH INTARSIA AND COLOUR DECORATIONS. TUSCAN, EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

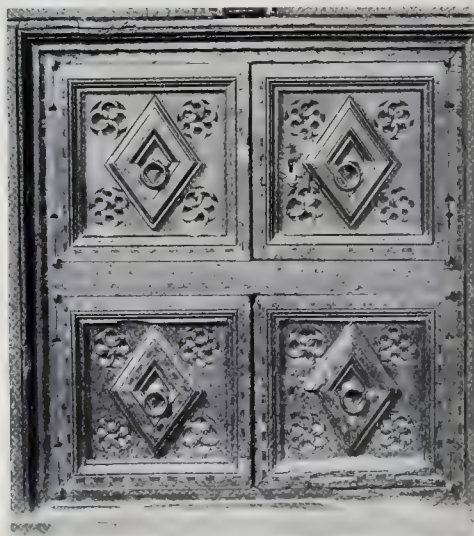


FIG. 26. CARVED AND INLAID DOORS. LATE
XIV CENTURY
FROM THE SACRISTY OF SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE

acteristic manner. The simplicity of its form and the arrangement of its decoration in successive rectangular composition are illustrations of the most excellent work of that period. In the upper tier of panels are decorations representing ladies in flowing robes mounted on horses and holding falcons, alternating with those composed of knights, ladies, and conventionalized trees. Bordering the top and bottom of the chest are bands of painted ornament of more abstract design. Figure 3 which shows

the same arrangement of a very similar decoration appears to have been much restored. This, with the foregoing, probably formed a pair of marriage cassoni that held the trousseau of some patrician bride of the late fourteenth century. Another fine specimen in Figure 4, which originally came from the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova at Florence, is of about the same date. Its general form and the arrangement of its metal trimmings are identical with those of the preceding ones. The base member is outlined with Italian Gothic forms while the surface is enriched with an all-over painted pattern of the Florentine lily.

Of unusually fine preservation is the original state of the cassone from the Bardini Collection illustrated in Figure 5. This distinguished Sienese piece has a decoration of gilded pastiglia enhanced with colour. The decoration of the centre panel, an arch supported on twisted columns of Byzantine origin, the motifs on either side that enclose the heraldic shields, as well as those of



FIG. 27. SACRISTY CUPBOARD WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. TUSCAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE CHURCH OF S. MARIA PRIMERANA, FIESOLE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

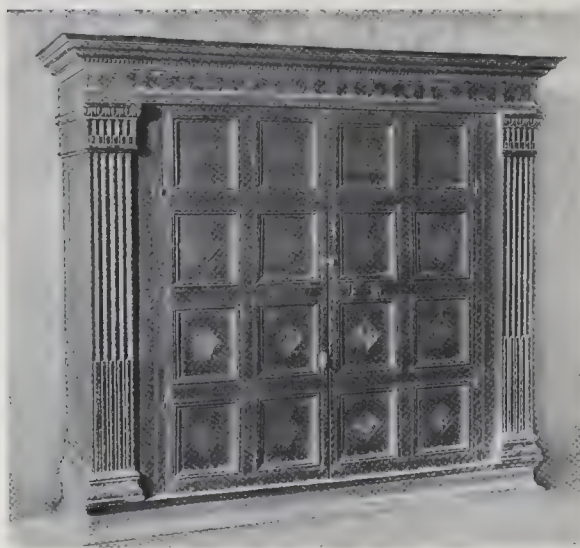


FIG. 28. MONASTERY LINEN CABINET. UMBRIAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

similar form that compose the enclosing border, are characteristic Italian motifs composing a typical Gothic design of the late fourteenth century. The top shows a variation of form that is a prototype of many Renaissance examples, while the base member is designed in a manner similar to that of Figure 4.

Noted painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were employed to enrich the cassoni of the Grandi with panels of such artistic value that many have been removed from their original setting and now hang in the galleries of Europe. One of this variety, fortunately intact and now preserved in the Museo Nazionale at Florence, is figured in No. 7. Its panel picturing the Baptistry and at the same time illustrating the love of pageantry of that age, is placed in the front of a cassone of primitive form. Though the ends of this panel have been shaped, many fine ones were of an undisturbed rectangular form. The all-over pattern work of the lily with which its frame is enriched, is a motif that proclaims its Florentine origin. It was also a common practice to enclose a series of painted panels in a framework of gilded pastiglia of elaborate form, as illustrated in the marriage cassone shown in Figure 8. The base member is treated in a decorative manner similar to Figures 4 and 5.

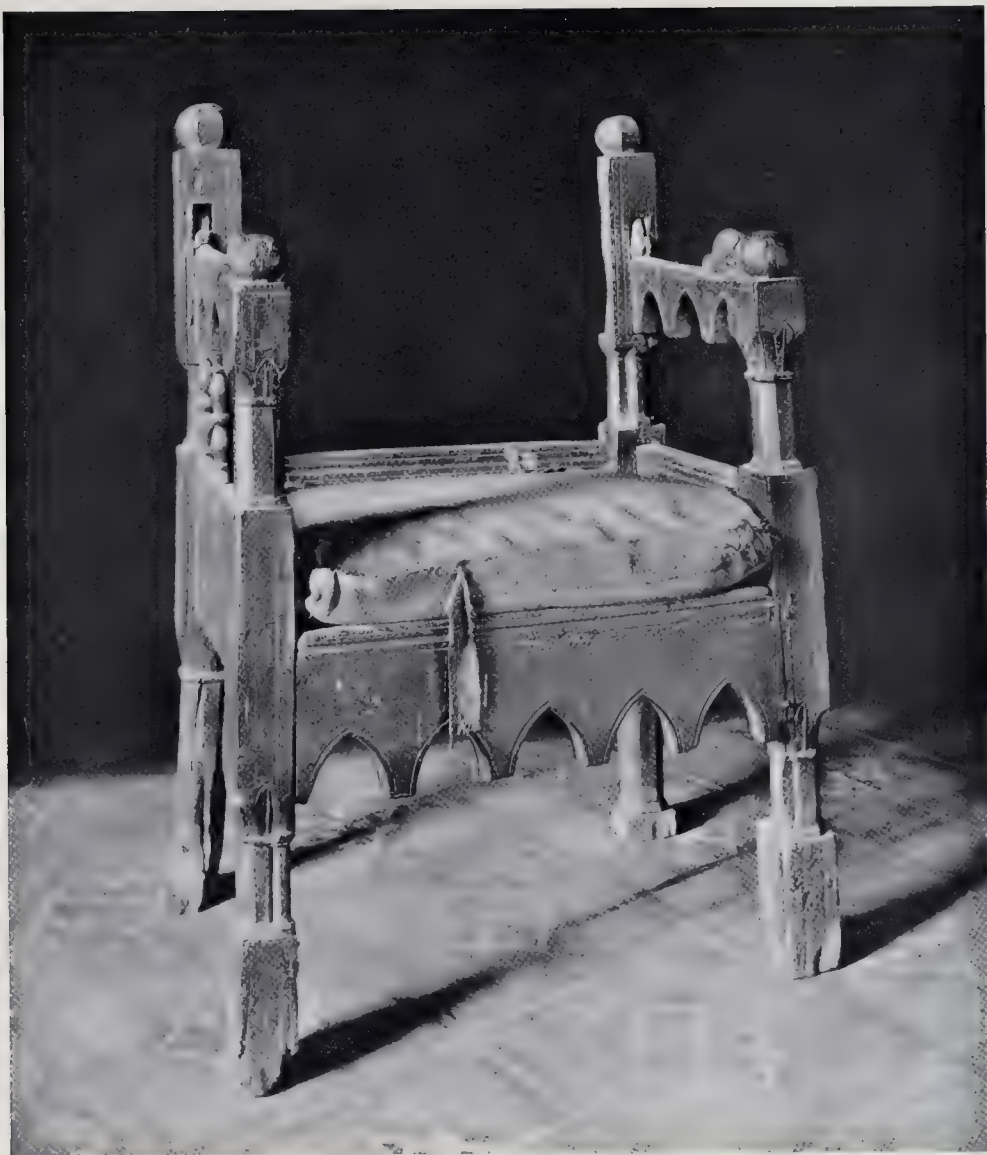


FIG. 29. SEDIA EPISCOPALE. XII CENTURY
FROM THE CATHEDRAL AT AGNANO

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 30. SEDIA DANTESCA WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. LOMBARD OR VENETIAN, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

Another form of the smaller chest of medieval times is illustrated in the Siennese coffer of ecclesiastical origin (Figure 6). The form of the top is one generally found on the smaller coffer and cassetta, as well as, in a modified way, on the important bridal cassoni and those finer specimens that were not designed for seats. The gilded pastiglia work, which is in an excellent state of preservation for this delicate medium, exhibits a highly characteristic pattern.

The entire fronts of marriage chests (*albi de ligno*), of which every patrician bride possessed at least two, were often filled with pas-

tiglia panels of figures in low relief depicting romantic events such as are shown in the beautiful panels, Figures 9 and 10, of the early fifteenth century from the South Kensington Museum. Figure 10, which appears to have suffered little from restoration, pictures a wedding scene, giving a valuable illustration of the rich and graceful costumes of that period of which de Mussis so deplorably writes. Though much of the beauty of form and colouring of Figure 9 has been impaired in the too-zealous restoration, yet it is a valuable document of this rare and fragile work. Figure 11, of the same period, with convex curved front, showing a variation of the primitive form that is sometimes met with, is fortunate in retaining an original base. It is decorated with pastiglia modelling that is much impaired and less graceful in design than that of the two preceding ones.

In Figure 13 is shown a rare Siennese chest dating about 1500, embellished



FIG. 31. SEDIA DANTESCA WITH DECORATIONS. ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 32. SUPPORTING END OF A CANOPY.
FIRST HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

with an elaborate pastiglia decoration of more abstract character. The front of the medieval form is spaced into three panels, each outlined with inscribed bands that frame geometrical forms enclosing heraldic devices. The ends are treated in a decorative manner similar to that of the front, the base being outlined with winged forms, while the surface of the whole is gilded and appears to be in its original state.

The heavy chest of simple rectangular form, with its base member carved with Gothic motifs of Umbrian character, is raised on four moulded feet. Intarsia decorations of early fifteenth century design embellish the square panels which fill its front and sides as well as the stiles that enclose them. Figure 15 is a rare model from Urbino showing another primitive form, as well as intarsia decoration of primitive style, the more geometric conception of its crude carving and inlay again illustrating the Gothic work of the Italians.

From the far north, in Savoy and Piedmonte and from the province of Venetia, come many chests elaborately carved with Gothic tracery that resemble so closely those from beyond the Alps as to be often confused with them. Figures 16, 18, and 19 illustrate early fifteenth century Italian designs of this character of which Figure 18 is more easily distinguished as a Venetian product by the way its arched heads, its spandril decorations, as well as the variety of shafts which support them, have been treated. Figure 19 is from a far northern province of Italy and is almost identical with those of France. It, like most surviving examples, shows too strongly its evidence of restoration.

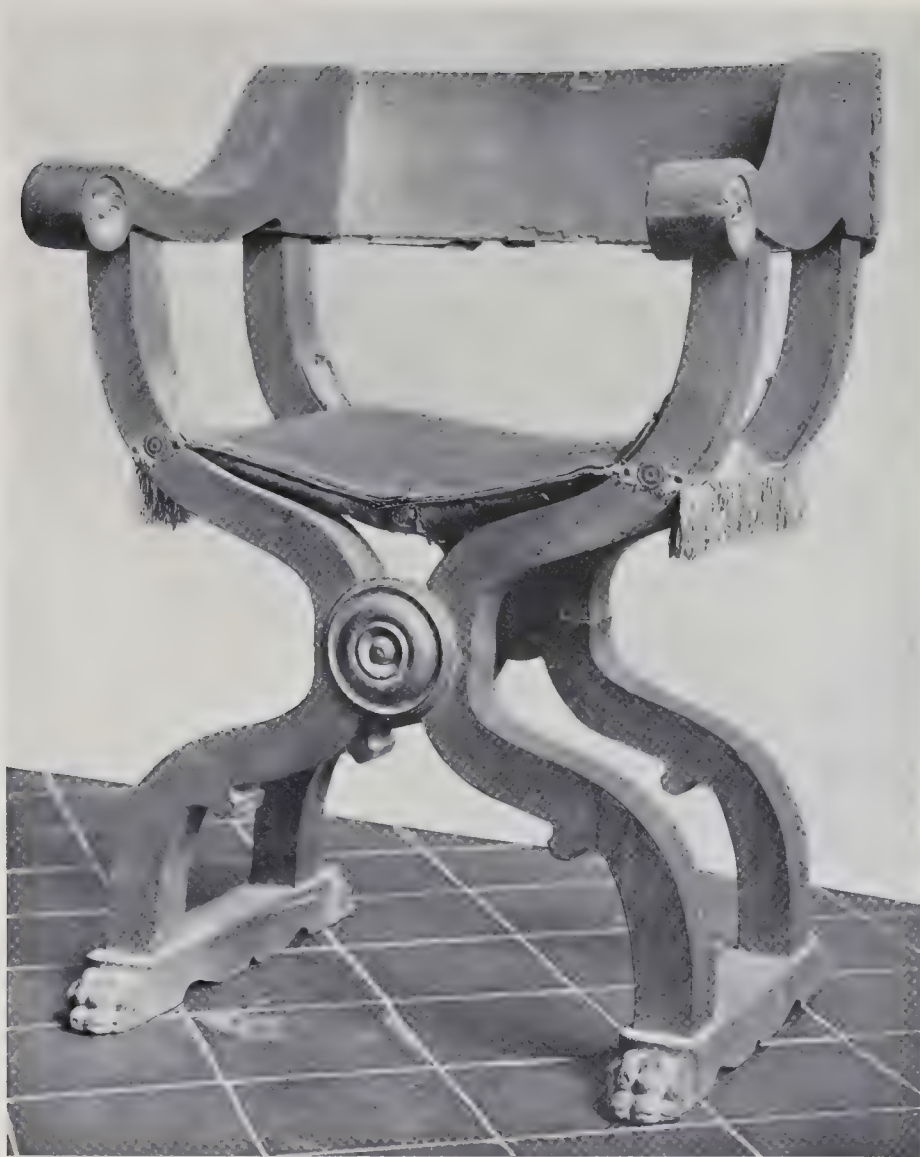


FIG. 33. SEDIA DANTESCA. FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1450-75
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 34. FOLDING BEECHWOOD MONASTERY CHAIR
XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

The square panel, whether enriched with intarsia or carving, has a decided preference in early Italian work as is exemplified in the Siennese chest of much taller proportions shown in Figure 20, which may be called a prototype of the credenza of the succeeding centuries. The carved motifs of the upper panels suggest the flamboyant style of the North, while the intarsia work of the lower panels, especially the bands of geometrical patterns, that enrich the stiles are highly characteristic of Italian design of this period. This intricate intarsia work of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries undoubtedly has its source in the work of those "Cosmatesque" masters at Rome who inlaid white

marble with small pieces of variously coloured stones and glass combined with gold in geometrical patterns. On the ambo of the Church of S. Cesareo and of the Araceli at Rome as well as entwining the twisted columns of the façade of the cathedral at Orvieto, are bands of this inlay almost identical in design with those embellishing numerous articles of



FIG. 35. SEDIA DANTESCA. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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furniture. Touches of colour, especially a yellow-red, were often introduced into some of the intarsia work of this nature giving it an even closer resemblance to the "Cosmati" work.¹

Figure 21 is an early fifteenth century cupboard with two doors, again

showing the favourite arrangement of intarsia panels. The cornice depicting dentals in perspective marked the first attempts at that wonderful art of perspective intarsia that reached its climax in the work of Fra Giovanni da Verona in the first years of the sixteenth century (Fig. 90). Figure 22 is a cupboard of ecclesiastical origin. It has a moulded base and cornice and its body is divided into two vertical parts, with doors panelled in oblong rectangles contain-

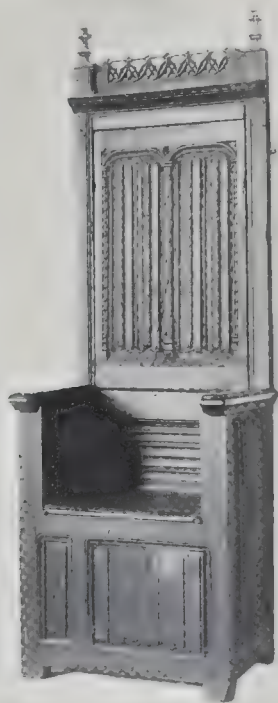


FIG. 36. ECCLESIASTICAL CHAIR. NORTHERN ITALY,
EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ing lozenge forms. This beautiful Umbrian work again illustrates the popularity of the carved tracery in that province, while at the same time it

¹The "Cosmati" workers flourished between the years 1100 and 1300 in Rome during the period of her greatest depression. The name is taken from the family of Cosmati, who were famed for this work which is undoubtedly of Byzantine inspiration. Glass mosaic was not used in profusion until the thirteenth century.

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shows how, in all characteristic Italian design, tracery has been subordinated to the rectangular form. This is also true of Figure 24 where carved panels of the most elaborate Italian character have been inserted in panelling formed of a succession of squares. Heraldic devices often appear associated with these more geometrical carved decorations in the manner illus-



FIG. 37. SECTION OF PANELLING WITH CANOPY, PROBABLY PART OF AN EARLY
XV CENTURY THRONE SEAT
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

trated. The stiles of the panels are simply but richly inlaid with bands of intarsia.¹

The long vertical panels of foreign origin that were so much used by the craftsmen of northern Italy and Venetia were also adopted by eclectic Umbria in the first half of the fifteenth century when she was under the artistic influence of Venetia. These she modified and simplified as is illus-

¹This is the famous piece of furniture from the Castello di Torchiera where, according to legend, Bianca Pellegrini, the mistress of Count Piermaria Rossi, hid herself to listen to prayers when she retired to Torchiera to escape persecution after the murder of Gian Galeazzo Visconti. It is in a remarkable state of preservation. The coat of arms and figures are gilded and decorated with polychrome.

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trated in the early fifteenth century Umbrian chest with doors, pictured in Figure 23. Though this piece has the appearance of having been altered, still all its parts are original and valuable documents.

The many cupboards, both with and without doors, that were let into the thick walls of the different apartments, together with the cassoni, ful-



FIG. 38. TUSCAN TABLE. ABOUT 1540-50
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

filled the domestic requirements before the development of the credenza, and account for the scarcity of the portable cupboard. Wall cupboards were generally of rectangular form, sometimes with arched tops and were placed at a convenient height from the floor, so that the crude majolica, glass, and metal plate adorning their shelves, could be of easy access. The only important portable cupboards dating before the Renaissance, are those magnificent examples of ecclesiastical origin similar to the Tuscan sacristy example illustrated in Figure 25. This early fifteenth century design, which has the simplicity and dignity of the best Tuscan work of this period, has, like most



FIG. 39. PRIMITIVE UMBRIAN TABLE. EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PHILIP LILMAN, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 40. NORTHERN ITALIAN TABLE. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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FIG. 41. TABLE ON WROUGHT-IRON TRIPOD. SIENESE, ABOUT 1400
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

contemporary pieces, two bodies, each with numerous doors. The square panels of the upper section are again enriched with lozenge forms of intarsia and are enclosed with stiles decorated with the running bands of inlay that were so popular in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. A similar cupboard of much shorter proportions, in the sacristy of Santa Maria Primerana at Fiesole, with a cornice of more classic type and with little intarsia figures of Early Renaissance character laid in the panels of the upper body, is a later development of the preceding form. The finest work of the mid-century often retains the square panel so character-

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istic of earlier work, but with decorations of Early Renaissance design instead of the geometric forms of the preceding style.

The Umbrian Monastery linen closet of the early fifteenth century, in Figure 28, has decided marks of the Renaissance, with its cornice of noticeably classic feeling and its fluted pilasters crowned with original caps. The fluted pilasters, as well as the large vertical panels that fill its ends, appear to be work of later date than the doors, which are panelled in successive rectangular forms with intarsia of early character. Transition pieces some times have these features combined but generally they are more successfully blended, as in Figure 27.

There are few records of the chairs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and from all accounts they were rarely found in the interiors of that age, stools, rough benches, and the cassoni being generally used for seats instead. In many of the old decorative documents can be seen well-designed wall benches with panelled backs, decorative throne seats, as well as a few crude chairs of rectangular structure, without arms and with rush seats, resembling the Italian peasant chair of to-day. The folding chair of X form is, from all accounts, the first important arm chair of domestic origin, though practically none of authentic origin exists dating before the Renaissance. They were of two forms, as illustrated in Figures 33 and 96. The earliest examples of these were crude and severe, as it was not until the close of the fifteenth century that the arm chair received the same decorative consideration as the cassone.

The greater number of the earliest extant arm chairs are of ecclesiastical origin. The bishop's throne or chair, like the choir stalls, received the greatest artistic attention in medieval times. Of these, the rare Byzantine relic, illustrated in Figure 29, dates, perhaps, from the twelfth century. The lower stretchers are evidently missing and these may have formed the base of the little turned members that supported the arches of the seat rail. No doubt the same material that covered the seat cushion was stretched between the up-rights of the back, forming the back of the chair. The arm chair of X form, popularly known as the "Dante chair", shown in Figure 31, was found at the

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Villa Machiavelli. Though dating from the Early Renaissance, its intarsia ornamentation has a Byzantine character that resembles the "Cosmati" inlay, patterns of which are repeated in much of the intarsia design of the first part of the fifteenth century. This chair is evidently from the workshops of the famous Embracchi family or from a design derived from that source. The form of the lower supports and the runners on which they rest, are characteristic of those of the earliest extant chairs of this structure.

Figure 30 is a chair of similar character and contemporary date with the same type of inlay composed in geometrical forms and placed at regular intervals instead of forming an all-over surface decoration. The velvet seat and back are doubtless a restoration, leather being the material most used in the earliest chairs of this type. The leather was, however, sometimes embossed with a simple design as is seen in the back of Figure 35.

Figure 33 shows one of the finest specimens in existence, every detail of which is in its original state, even to its leather seat-pad and back. The carved rosettes on the arm terminals and the claw feet of the runners, showing the influence of the antique, would indicate an Early Renaissance model dating about 1460. Figure 35 also shows similar claw feet terminals to the base runners and Renaissance rosettes on the arms, indicating its Early Renaissance origin. Another early form of the folding chair without arms is illustrated in the little beechwood monastery chair that comes from the collection in the Palazzo Davanzati (Figure 34). This is a sixteenth century example, but the structure is met with in chairs of earlier date.

Tables were rare in the fourteenth century and few of these have survived the ravages of time. Some, constructed of long boards laid on trestles, are seen in the early frescos and illustrations, and were undoubtedly the form in common use. The earliest existing tables are generally constructed in the manner of the primitive Umbrian example in Figure 39. The end supports which rest on base runners of curved outline are strengthened with a crude stretcher secured at each end with wooden pins. The flamboyant lines of the Gothic tracery recall both northern and Venetian decoration of the early fifteenth century with which period this piece is contemporary. Figure 38 is



FIG. 42. BED WITH PAINTED DECORATIONS. ABOUT 1400
FROM THE OSPEDALE DEL CERVO, FISTOIA

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a variation of similar form. An enclosed body with drawers in the shaped ends occupies the place of the crude stretcher in the preceding example. The surface decoration of the ends which is of doubtful origin and the square panel forms are in the style of the Italian Gothic, while the scrolls that partly outline the ends suggest Renaissance brackets of later design.

Example 40 has a structure very similar to that illustrated in Figure 38. Its simple moulds and its lack of ornamentation give to it an appearance of a more primitive period than can be claimed for it. The brackets indicate an Early Renaissance design, but because of its northern origin a much later date must be attributed to it.

Few small centre tables, like the little Sienese model from the Bardini Collection, are to be found dating from this period and evidently they were not frequently used. The design of the wrought-iron tripod stand which supports the circular wooden top marks it as a product of the early fifteenth century.

Italian paintings and illustrations of the fifteenth century are especially valuable documents of early furniture design. "The Birth of the Virgin", a favourite theme of the fifteenth century painters, pictures in a naïve way the furnishing of the interiors of that age in which a bed similar to that in Figure 42 is often depicted. This is perhaps one of the earliest Italian beds in existence, and dating from the colourful fourteenth century, it proves that beds as well as cassoni of this period were often decorated with paintings. Practically all documents show beds of Pre-Renaissance and Early Renaissance design enclosed to the base and raised on a dais with hinged tops, revealing compartments that were probably used for the storage of clothing or linen. The example given was, without doubt, originally set up in this way, as it was not until the sixteenth century that the bed of modern structure came into general use.

Another favourite design for the early fifteenth century bed is the one illustrated in Figure 43, with a square-panelled head and foot board decorated with simple bands of inlay and raised on a dais. Many beds similar to this one can be seen in the old pictures and illustrations. One of almost identical design is portrayed in Giovanni da Milano's fresco "The Birth of the Virgin", in the church of Santa Croce at Florence.



FIG. 43. PANELLED BED WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. TUSCAN, EARLY XV CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE, NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF CARL W. HAMILTON, ESQ., NEW YORK



FIG. 44. VENETIAN CASSONE WITH CARVED AND INLAID DECORATIONS. SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY RENAISSANCE

THE SECOND HALF OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY



THE ARTISTIC attainments of the fifteenth century were so stupendous and so lofty of ideal that the many other achievements which this age contributed to our Western civilization seem to the student of art history to be totally eclipsed. Literature, sculpture, painting, and architecture, as well as furniture, in the order named, contributed their development to the new culture. Dante's medieval theology, appealing to the authority of Virgil and Aristotle, Pisano carving pagan figures on Gothic baptismal fonts, Giotto picturing medieval emotions in the manner of the moderns, and Brunelleschi crowning a Tuscan Gothic Cathedral with the first architectural masterpiece of the Renaissance, all mark the transition of these arts from medieval to Renaissance expression, establishing at the same time an intense desire for the new culture which developed with such amazing rapidity during the fifteenth century.

The Early Renaissance owes a great debt to medieval fancy and romance for the spirit of adventure and of inventiveness that pervades most of its finest expression. It was an intellectual age of preparation and experiment rather than of perfection. "The details borrowed from the antique undergo fantastic transmutation in the hands of men accustomed to the vehement emotions of the romantic ages. Whatever the Renaissance took from antique art, it was at first unable to assimilate either the moderation of the Greeks or the practical sobriety of the Romans. Christianity had deepened and intensified the source of imaginative life, and just as reminiscences of classic style impaired Italian Gothic, so now a trace of Gothic is perceptible in the would-be classic work of the revival."¹

¹Symonds's "Renaissance in Italy—The Fine Arts."

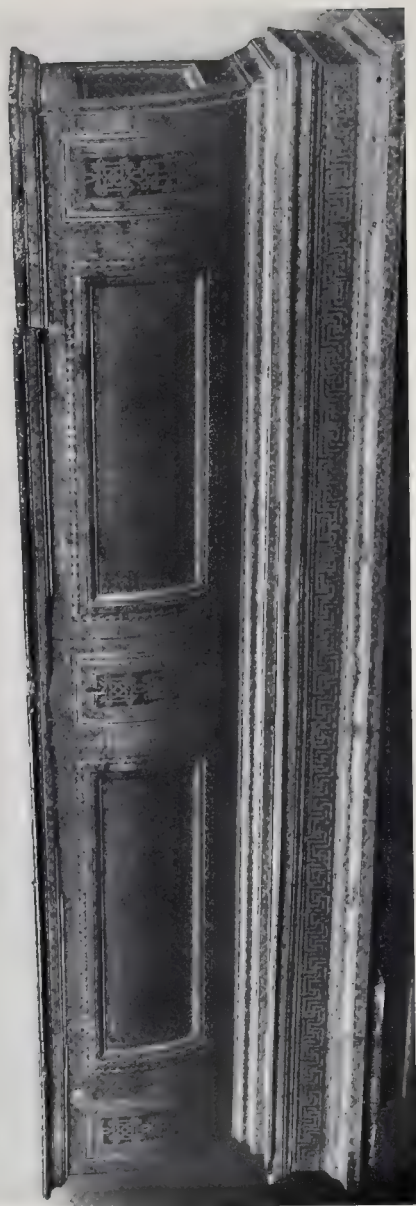


FIG. 45. CASSONE WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

During this age of enthusiasm and prodigious attainment the entire Italian nation seemed to be endowed with an innate sense of beauty, and to be stirred by a widely diffused aesthetic impulse for creative manifestation. As Symonds says: "The speech of the Italians at that epoch, their social habits, their ideals of manners, their standard of morality, the estimate they formed of men, were alike conditioned and qualified by art. It was an age of splendid ceremonies and magnificent parade, when the furniture of houses, the armour of soldiers, the dress of citizens, the pomp of war, and the pageantry of festival were invariably and inevitably beautiful. On the meanest articles of domestic utility, cups and platters, door panels and chimney pieces, coverlets for beds and lids of linen chests, a wealth of artistic invention was lavished by innumerable craftsmen, no less skilled in technical details than distinguished by rare taste."

Florence, the cradle of the Renaissance, led all the arts in the fifteenth century, and even during the later Renaissance, after she had lost her position as centre of the arts, she maintained a high standard that her rivals sought to emulate.

The wise and prudent Cosimo de' Medici (*Pater Patriae*), who had laid a foundation for the ease, prosperity, and culture of Early Renaissance Florence, was succeeded in 1469 by the magnificent Lorenzo, the greatest prince of the fifteenth century, who fostered in the atmosphere of the Platonic Academy, founded by Cosimo, that group of Florentine masters who have given to the world the loveliest and most graceful masterpieces in the domain of art. Donatello, the first of these early masters, blending the gentle Christian emotions with Greek culture, strikes the first note in the period of unaffected grace and purity that reveals its full spiritual loveliness in the work of Rossellino, Settignano, and Luca della Robbia. This refinement permeates the work of Florence of this period. Orcagna's angels, that have been likened to gardens of lilies; Benozzo Gozzoli's paradise with its rose trellises, peacocks, and pleasant groves; and the sensitive charm of Botticelli's Aphrodite and Madonnas display an unexcelled aesthetic quality that not only manifested itself in the finer arts but ennobled the meaner details of social and domestic life as well.



FIG. 46. CASSONE FRONT, OF GILDED PASTIGLIA WITH PAINTED PANEL DECORATIONS. FLORENTINE, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF SAMUEL UNTERMYER, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 47. FLORENTINE CASSONE. ABOUT 1550-60
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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About 1450 practically all the Latin classics now extant had been brought to light by the arduous search of the biblomaniacs, and the energies of the most noted Florentine scholars had become influenced by Latin and Greek scholarship. Architecture was the last of the arts to assume classic forms, though sculpture and painting had evolved from medievalism in the preceding century, yet from the time of Brunelleschi's visit to Rome with Donatello, in 1403, architecture developed with such amazing rapidity that by the end of the fifteenth century Florence had reared a succession of noble churches and stately palaces¹ that are her greatest achievements in Renaissance architecture.

Nor was the new domestic architectural style confined to the town palaces, for the Florentines, to whom we are indebted for the first country houses in the modern sense of the word, are said to have built unrivalled Quattrocento villas, of which the greater number were destroyed in the siege of 1529. Referring to these, a contemporary writes: "Round about Florence lie many villas in a transparent atmosphere, amid cheerful scenery and with a splendid view; there is little fog, and no injurious winds, all is good, and the water pure and healthful. Of the numerous buildings many are like palaces, many like castles, costly and beautiful."² Among these we have some account of the Medici villas, which by the close of the fifteenth century were numerous. "Seldom have comfort and splendour, richness and simplicity, the beauties of art and nature, been more happily combined than in these villas where Lorenzo, himself the most perfect of hosts, entertained the foremost scholars of the age." A few years before Michelozzo began the Riccardi palace he designed the house and gardens of Careggi. In this villa, which Vasari claims to be "a thing truly rich and magnificent", Cosimo spent his happiest hours in the study of Plato and the discussion of philosophy with Marsilio Ficino. For three generations it was the favourite villa of the Medici, who added to its improvements and embellishments until its fame spread far and wide. Gian Galeazzo, on that memorable visit to Florence, writes of this villa

¹The Pallazzi Riccardi, Guatesi, Rucellai, Antinori, Strozzi, Gondi, Guadagni, and many other less notable were built in this period for the free and worldly splendour of those times.

²"Trattato del Governo della Famiglia." Torino.

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FIG. 48. PANEL FROM A CASSONE. ABOUT 1450-60
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

that he "was no less delighted with the gardens, which are altogether enchanting, than with the noble building, which is certainly one of the finest houses, when you consider the halls, bedrooms, kitchens, and furniture."¹

Another villa built by Michelozzo for Cosimo, is Cafaggiuolo in the Val Mugello, some eighteen miles from Florence. Though built with moat and drawbridge, it had "fair halls and saloons for music and books" and as Vasari writes, "was with gardens, fountains, aviaries, and all that makes the villa fair and pleasant." Verocchio's famous fountain with the boy strangling the dolphin, now in the courtyard of the Palazzo Vecchio, as well as the bronze David by the same master, once graced this villa. Here Lorenzo made many improvements, especially in the gardens, where he added a collection of rare plants.

These villas did not, however, satisfy the princely ambition of the magnificent Lorenzo, so he had Giuliano di Sangallo build the country house at Poggio à Caiano, on the banks of the Ombrone, about half way between Florence and Pistoia. The double flight of stairs leading to the upper loggia and the vaulted hall, which Vasari claims to have been the loftiest he had ever seen, are still standing. It was here that Andrea del Sarto and his pupils painted the delightful frescos commemorating the Sultan of Babylon's gift to

¹Bibliothèque Nationale, Fonds italien, 1588.

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Lorenzo of exotic birds and strange animals, while at Lo Spedaletto, another house built by Sangallo, masters no less renowned than Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and Filippino decorated the hall with Lorenzo's favourite myths. Those fragments of Botticelli frescos, of unrivalled loveliness, now hanging on the stairs of the Louvre, once adorned a country house of the Tornabuoni between Careggi and Fiesole. The old house, with its square tower, pillared loggia and doorway carved with the Tornabuoni arms, hid in a tangle of roses and jessamine, still remains, but of the furnishings and decorations naught but the priceless fragments of frescos can be accounted for.

The Florentines were conscious of their intellectual and artistic superiority and realized that their Quattrocento masters had given the basic models for the new forms of the coveted art. In recording the pompous and spectacular visit of Gian Galeazzo of Milan to Lorenzo de' Medici the old Florentine historian Ammirato gives his criticism of the superiority of Florentine art to that of Lombardy. He writes that even Gian Galeazzo, "young and proud, and the minion of fortune, as he was, found himself obliged to admit that all his splendour was outdone by the magnificence of Lorenzo, inasmuch as the precious treasures of the Medici were far more admirable from the artistic excellence of the workmanship than from the mere value of the material. He could not but confess that art had a higher value than mere costliness, as being attainable only by more arduous labour, and with greater difficulty; while he declared that in all Italy he had not seen so great a number of paintings by the first masters, of gems, beautiful vases, statues, ancient and modern, bronzes, medals, and rare books, as he now saw collected in the palace of the Medici."¹ Even a nobler prince, like Duke Federigo of Urbino, is said to have exclaimed when he saw the innumerable treasures of Lorenzo: "How much can love and perseverance accomplish! I behold, here, a royal treasure house; yet one such as no king is able to gather together, either by money, or power, or rapine."

In that famous letter so full of worldly wisdom and the requirements of a high standard of living, that Lorenzo wrote to his son Giovanni at Rome, we

¹ *Istorie, Fiorentina*, lib XXIII, Gonf. 1079.

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learn more of the professed ideals and sincerity of fifteenth century Florentine life and art. He writes: "Let there be no affectation of an excess of austerity and seriousness foreign to your real character, for the imputation of hypocrisy is as much to be avoided as Scylla and Charybdis. In your household and manner of life you should tune your behaviour by the note of moderation. A good stable and a well ordered and refined household are to be preferred before pomp and display. Much more desirable is the distinction which comes from possessing a few rare antiques and fine books." While there is a diversity of opinion concerning this sincerity and artistic appreciation, Lorenzo's brilliant and princely philosophy, as well as his keen recognition of genius, is undisputed.¹ In his time all branches of the arts and crafts were encouraged and their productions were raised to a high standard of perfection. In Florence, before his death, there were eighty-five silk factories making gold brocade, velvet, satin, damask, and taffeta; eighty-four workshops for cabinet making and intarsia, and forty-four goldsmiths' and silversmiths' shops.²

Great wealth accumulated through banking houses and extensive trade soon encouraged many of the more powerful Florentine families to indulge in a finer display corresponding to their means and in accord with the magnificent architecture of their houses. The severe classicism and the spiritual and philosophical atmosphere of Cosimo's day were gradually tempered by the splendour of a less cautiously democratic society, verging on the ostentatious in the later years of Lorenzo's time. Their stately palaces were not only rich in masterpieces of painting and sculpture, but were dignified with the most classic furniture of the Renaissance, as well as the rarest of stuffs, the finest of linens, gold and silver plate and exquisite crystal from Venice. Festivals, banquets, and other forms of social display grew more frequent and elaborate in the later years of the century when luxury and extravagance grew bolder, often exceeding the means of the wealthy. Luca Pitti's noble passion for building is said to have

¹It is claimed that after decreeing the confiscation of some citizen's property or perhaps causing his death, he would take himself to the Platonic Academy, where he would dispute with arduous interest on "Virtue" or "The Immortality of the Soul," or go from the company of abandoned profligates to engage in the criticism of poetry with Poliziano and Pulici.

²From the *Cronaca di Benedetto Dei*, 1470-1492: MS. in the Magliabechianæ, printed in Pagnini, I. c. ii. 295 et seq.



FIG. 49. CASSONE WITH PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. ABOUT 1475
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 50. CASSONE WITH PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. ABOUT 1475
FROM THE COLLECTION OF CONTE GUINIGI, ITALY

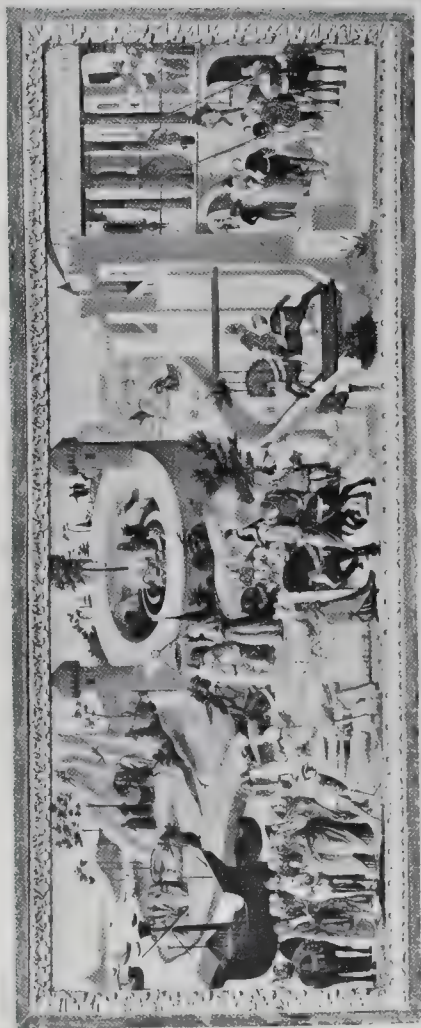


FIG. 51. PAINTED PANELS FROM A PAIR OF CASSONI ATTRIBUTED TO PISANELLO
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 52. CARVED WOOD AND GILDED CASSONE WITH PAINTED PANEL. FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1475
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

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been his ruin, while others courted financial disaster in less noble ways. Benedetto Salutati was an especially splendid and artistic spendthrift as we learn from old records. At the time of the feast given to the sons of the King of Naples in the year of 1476, his house was hung with tapestries and wreaths of yew. The floors of the great halls were covered with richly worked carpets, while from the ceilings hung great carved and gilded chandeliers with many wax candles. In the dining hall, the long table raised on a dais was spread with the finest lace, while a magnificent credenza, on which was arranged many pieces of gold and silver plate, occupied nearly the whole of one wall. Other rooms are spoken of, with verdure hangings and rich carpets.

Venice, the most powerful state in Italy during the fifteenth century, because of her isolation and her good government, enjoyed a security that was little affected by the foreign invasions, which accounts for the light and airy Gothic palaces lining her canals as early as the fourteenth century when the other lords of Italy were shut up in their medieval battlemented palaces and towers. This fanciful Gothic style, which seemed to reflect the spirit of Venice so adequately, very reluctantly yielded to the inevitable Renaissance, and this fact places Venice some twenty to fifty years behind the other art centres in her development of Renaissance Art. After the Palazzo Riccardi had been built she was still indulging in Gothic structures like the Porta della Carta, 1439, and it was not until 1480 that any palace had been reared approaching in Renaissance purity the Riccardi Palace of Florence.¹

Molmenti tells us that a noble refinement was in the atmosphere, a sumptuous yet versatile taste enveloped every detail of domestic life. Nor was luxury in furnishing the palace confined to the reception room. It spread to the ordinary dwelling room and especially to the bedroom. Casola on entering a bed-chamber in a Venetian palace toward the close of the fifteenth century is amazed, and cannot express his feelings. In his enthusiasm he writes: "The ornamentation of the room where we were might have cost 11,000 ducats or more and it had a chimney piece all of Carrara marble

¹Pal. Carnaro Spinelli (1480), Pal. Vendramini (1481), Pal. Trevisano (1485). These are followed by others of equal renown.



FIG. 53. GILDED CASSONE WITH PAINTED PANELS. FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1460-70
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 53A. CARVED WOOD CASSONE WITH AN INTARSIA PANEL. FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1485
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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shining like gold. It was worked so subtly in figures and foliage that neither Praxiteles nor Phidias could have added anything to them. The ceiling of the room was well executed in ultramarine blue and the walls were so well done that I cannot describe them. The lectern alone represents five hundred ducats and the furniture of the room was in the Venetian style with beautiful and natural figures and a great deal of gold over all."

While Florence claimed the scholarship of the Renaissance and Venice the power and luxury, the aristocratic Houses of Ferrara, Mantua, and Urbino excelled in the graces and refinements of social life.

Ferrara at this period was the most important of these towns. During the rule of her accomplished Quattrocento dukes she had become a renowned centre of art and learning, where Isabella d'Este, that illustrious connoisseur of the following epoch, was from childhood surrounded by the finest works of art. The princes of this famous house showed their taste for art and literature as early as the preceding century, when they entertained as their guests Giotto and Petrarch in the old battlemented palace, "the Castello", reared by the architect Bartolino da Novara in the fourteenth century. Like the Florentines, the nobles of Ferrara and Mantua at an early date had sumptuous villas as well as palaces adorned with enchanting frescos by such masters as Pisanello and Piero della Francesca, with tapestries that were the pride of their collections, furniture painted or designed by renowned artists, and the rarest majolica from Faenza and Urbino. The Schifanoia, where Isabella spent many years of her childhood, was embellished by the Ferrarese master, Francesco Cossa, and his followers, with a renowned series of pastoral and hunting scenes, while the beautiful Villa Belriguardo, on the banks of the Po, whose rooms are said to have equalled the number of the days of the year, had its new halls decorated by Ercole Roberti in 1487, and a chapel painted with frescos by Cosimo Tura. This villa, the admiration of artists and the envy of princes, was evidently the most beautiful of those of the Early Renaissance. Lodovico Sforza, while on a visit here after his marriage to Beatrice, writes to that fascinating d'Este princess: "I would not for all the world have missed seeing this place. For in truth I have never seen so large and fine a house and gardens, or one that is so



FIG. 54. CARVED AND GILDED CASSONE. VERONA OR MANTUA, END OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE GALLERIA POLDI PEZZOLI, MILAN



FIG. 54A. CARVED WOOD AND GILDED CASSONE. NORTHERN ITALY, END OF THE XV CENTURY



FIG. 55. CASSONE WITH GILDED PASTIGLIA AND PAINTED DECORATIONS. NORTHERN ITALY, END OF THE XV CENTURY

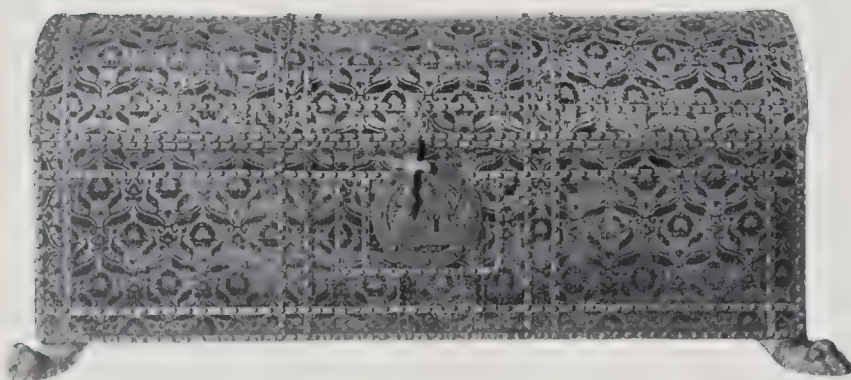


FIG. 56. CASSONE COVERED WITH VELVET. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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well laid out and adorned with such excellent painting. I do not believe there is such another villa in the whole world, at once so noble and spacious, and at the same time so thoroughly well planned and comfortable. To say the truth, if I were asked to decide whether Vigevano, the Castello at Pavia, or this house were the finest palace in the world, the Castello must forgive me, for I would certainly choose Belriguardo."¹

Though Mantua was less splendid and luxurious than Ferrara, the dukes of this illustrious house were great connoisseurs in matters pertaining to art. The Castello with its four massive corner towers had been built by Bartolino da Novara during the rule of Gianfrancesco I (1382-1407). Lodovico (1444-1478) was the great patron of Early Renaissance art. He repeatedly invited Alberti to Mantua where, besides designing the chapel of the Incoronata in the Duomo, he designed the church of S. Andrea, which is one of the earliest and most successful pieces of ecclesiastical architecture in the new classic style. It was he who enticed Mantegna to this court where he remained for fifty years, he who had Pisanello decorate a hall in the Castello with fresco and for him Donatello secured antiques. Distinguished painters and sculptors were employed by Lodovico to decorate the various ducal villas at Goïto, Gonzaga, Cavriana, and Revere that had been built or improved by the Tuscan architect, Luca Fancelli, whom he had engaged for his service in 1450.

The palace of Urbino, that perfect setting for the ideal Renaissance court of the Quattrocento, is the "just embodiment in architecture of Italian romance, the perfect analogue of the 'Orlando Innamorato'." Duke Federico, trained in the famous school of Vittorino da Feltre, where the first sons and daughters of the Italian nobility received that perfect training of the body and mind, is famed among Italian despots for his humanity and virtue. For him, the Dalmatian architect, Luziano, began the vast white limestone palace in 1454, which still retains traces of its former splendour. In its succession of well-proportioned halls, chambers, and cabinets—where Emilia Pia held debate on love with Bembo and Castiglione, where illustrious men of art and letters met in the society of princes, popes, and tyrants—still exist an occasional chimney

¹E. Motta, *Giornale st. d. lett. ital.*, vii, 387.

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piece of stone, some fine carved and painted ceilings with equally splendid cornices and doors rivalling in beauty those of S. Pietro at Perugia. In the "Sala degli Angeli" a stone chimney piece still remains, having a frieze of putti with gilded wings and hair, dancing on an ultramarine ground. Above on the receding hood more putti bear the arms of the house, while the whole is supported on pilasters carved with children holding vases of flowers. There is also a little chapel, belonging to the private apartments of the duke and duchess, encrusted with exquisite work in marble and stucco, while directly above this a small cabinet is still embellished with intarsia of the highest order. But the library of Duke Federico, the walls and ceiling of which were once adorned with the finest intarsia, the numerous tapestried chambers, the frescoed halls, the unrivalled furniture, books, and plate, are sought for in vain in this palace that Castiglione claims was once the fairest in all Italy.

This courtier, giving a description of the same palace, writes that Duke Federico "so well furnished the palace with everything suitable that it seemed not a palace but a city in the form of a palace; and not merely with what is ordinarily used, such as silver vases, hangings of richest cloth-of-gold and silk and other similar things, but for ornament he added countless antique statues in marble and bronze, pictures most choice, and musical instruments of every sort, nor would he admit anything there that was not very rare and excellent."¹ Later, in a letter of Isabella d'Este (1494), we gather some idea of the same famous palace at the close of the Early Renaissance. She writes to her husband: "This palace is far finer than I ever expected. Besides the natural beauty of the place, it is very richly furnished with tapestries, hangings, and silver plate; and I must tell you that in all the different rooms which I have occupied in this Duke's different homes, the hangings have never been moved from one place to another,² and from the first day I arrived at Gubbio until now I have been entertained more and more sumptuously every day."³

¹ Castiglione, "The Book of the Courtier."

² It was evidently a habit in Italy, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as in Northern Europe, to move most of the furnishings from place to place.

³ Cartwright, "Isabella d'Este."



FIG. 57. GILDED CASSONE WITH PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. MANTUA OR VENETIA, ABOUT 1500



FIG. 58. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. LOMBARDY, LATE XV CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

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Though the Treaty of Lodi had brought more time for peaceful pursuits, it was not until the opening years of the High Renaissance that the Ducal House of Milan rivalled in any way the graceful and princely manner of living indulged in by the Houses of Mantua, Ferrara, and Urbino. The old ducal line of the Visconti had died out with Filippo Maria, while Francesco Sforza, who succeeded to the duchy (1450) was too much occupied making secure his title to indulge in art to an extensive degree, although he employed humanists, gave his sons a princely education, and maintained an extravagant court. He, like his sons, an indefatigable builder, continued the work on the cathedral and the Certosa di Pavia, while he began that vast edifice, the "Castello", at Milan that became the centre of the arts during the brilliant rule of Lodovico. In nearly all the cities of the north, except in Piedmonte, where feudalism still prevailed, princes and private citizens alike gave great impetus to the new movement in art. In a palace in the old Lombard town of Castiglione the furnishings of Cardinal Branda Castiglione, a devoted patron of the arts and a favourite of Filippo Maria Visconti, remain almost intact from his day. His bed-chamber, on the piano nobile reached by a stately flight of stairs, contains his great canopied bed, silk-cushioned arm chair and other furniture enriched with exquisite marquetry work. The walls of this chamber are painted with black fruit trees against a red ground with white putti at intervals, and the pavement is of mosaic. On the same floor is his library with its heavy beamed ceiling and its walls frescoed with strange landscapes of town and country. The great hall still retains its beautiful carved Gothic doorways and a splendid Quattrocento chimney piece.¹

Rome was dominated by the Papacy, on which her Early Renaissance artistic activities were concentrated. Only a few historical documents refer to the domestic or social life of her people or princes.²

Pope Nicholas V (1447-55), the great scholar who before his elevation to

¹Egerton Williams, "Lombard Towns of Italy."

²We have an account of a magnificent reception accorded Eleanor of Aragon, daughter of the King of Naples, when passing through Rome on the way to her nuptials at Ferrara. She was conducted to a palace erected by the young Riario spoken of with walls of precious woods, the interiors brilliant with gilding and lustrous silks, as well as plate of gold and silver. Muratori, "Antichita Estensi" in "The Life of Duke Ercole I."



FIG. 58A. VENETIAN CARVED WOOD CASSONE. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE DUVEIN BROS., NEW YORK CITY

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the Papacy collected the library for Cosimo de' Medici, was one of the greatest humanists of the fifteenth century with whom began that period of the Papacy, as a secular power devoted to art and culture, which culminated with Leo X.



FIG. 59. CARVED AND GILDED CANDLESTICK
FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY



FIG. 60. CARVED AND GILDED CANDLESTICK
SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY

FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

Nicholas V attracted scholars, painters, and architects to Rome, encouraging and fostering art and learning. He founded the Vatican Library, for which he collected five thousand volumes, and laid idealistic plans for Rome as the centre of art and learning and "the admired head of Christendom". Of his successors who continued this "policy of culture" Sextus IV, son of a

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peasant, and a distinguished scholar, openly elevated his princely importance above the pontifical. Succeeding pontiffs frankly acknowledged their illegitimate children whom they established, together with their relatives, at the heads of princely houses. This practice naturally encouraged the erection of magnificently furnished palaces, though not until the High Renaissance and the Baroque century, when Rome began to vie with the older aristocratic centres in social display, aggrandizing her newly established and powerful aristocracy.

Naples and Sicily, with a population lawless, ignorant, and poor, could have contributed but little to the development of the Renaissance, yet the court of Alfonzo and Ferranti, called a medley of luxury and vice, refinement and cruelty, attracted many renowned Latin and Greek scholars during the period, establishing there a certain culture. This was no doubt encouraged by the learned Duchess Ippolita, of the Sforza family, with whom Lorenzo de' Medici found most agreeable intercourse on his frequent visits to the court.

The general interior of the Early Renaissance palace shows a marked development in unity of decorative work. The classic architectural schemes of the exterior invaded the principal apartments of the interior as well. Toward the end of the century walls were sometimes broken with pilasters supporting magnificent classic cornices that were often gilded and further enriched with polychrome decorations, while others were broken with panelled wainscotings of intarsia, above which were frescos or tapestries. Wainscotings and walls were also panelled with marbles, often, as in the Venetian interior, of many colours. Later in the period the coffered and panelled ceiling began to supplant the crudely beamed and raftered ceiling of earlier style. The beamed ceiling appears all through the work of the Renaissance, but when it was used in important apartments it was generally of more refined proportions and was decorated with designs of gold and colour. The chimney pieces, which were important decorative features of formal apartments, were generally of stone, though occasionally of marble. Many were constructed with receding hoods springing from classic cornices with friezes carved with coats of arms and classic motifs; these were in turn supported on pilasters and corbels of classic design.



FIG. 61. CARVED AND GILDED CANDLESTICK
FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1500
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 62. BRONZE CANDLESTICK. FLORENTINE
ABOUT 1480-90
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE



FIG. 63. CAST TAKEN FROM THE ANTIQUE
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

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The mastery of perspective and foreshortening encouraged the Early Renaissance painters to cover vast wall surfaces with enchanting frescos of landscapes showing villas or vistas with palaces and towers, while in many pastoral and hunting scenes, decorative birds and gardens appear. Many masters like Gentile da Fabriano and Piero di Cosimo delighted in flowers, animals, and pleasing curious things.¹

The numerous tapestries recorded in the Early Renaissance inventories evidently played an important part in the decoration of the princely houses. The first known Italian manufactory of arras was established at Mantua in 1419, while at Venice the same industry was started by John of Bruges and Valentine of Arras in 1422.² As early as 1436, Niccolo III brought Flemish weavers to Ferrara, where under Leonello and especially under Ercole I their industry reached a highly developed state that was sustained until the middle of the sixteenth century, when it began to wane. Though woven by Flemings and Frenchmen, many of these tapestries were produced from cartoons drawn by such artists as Cosimo Tura and Dosso Dossi, which naturally gives them a strong Italian character. Venetian looms were evidently busy throughout the sixteenth century, for in 1597 Alfonso II of Ferrara ordered tapestries for his palace from a Venetian maker after the decline of the Ferrara industry.

At the time of Isabella d'Este's marriage to the Gonzaga prince (1490) the walls of the Sala Grande of the old Castello at Ferrara were hung with the celebrated arras that had been brought from Naples by Isabella's mother, the Duchess Leonora. They included, besides the magnificent "Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon", six famous pieces known as "La Pastourelle", woven with gold and silver and coloured silks. These coveted Flemish treasures, said to have been over a hundred years in the process of weaving, greatly excited the admiration of the Emperor Charles V when he visited the Reggio.

The intarsia work of the Early Renaissance deserves the study and admiration that it attracts, while that of the last years of the fifteenth and the

¹ Paolo Uccelli painted whole menageries and aviaries.

² "Degli Arras in Venetia," Urbani de Gheltof.

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FIG. 64. BRONZE CANDELABRUM. SECOND
HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE CAPITULO DELLA CATTEDRALE, PISTOIA

early years of the sixteenth centuries ranks among Italy's greatest artistic achievements.

Siena was the cradle of intarsia and carving, where the record of a long list of masters has been preserved. As early as the year 1259 Manuello and his son Parti are mentioned as being employed on the ancient choir of the Cathedral and in the year 1400 that renowned master of intarsia, Domenico di Nicolo, who worked for twelve years in the beautiful chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena, is recorded as the head of the Opera del Duomo. Much early work was done at Orvieto, but the craftsmen were all Sienese. Although

there were famous masters from other sections, those of Siena were constantly being sent to other great towns to execute important work. Taddeo Gaddi, the celebrated painter, is known to have worked in intarsia and many other well known masters were engaged in the same occupation at Florence during the last half of the fifteenth century. The most notable of these was Giuliano di Nardi (1432 to 1490), who executed the seats and presses for the sacristy of Santa Maria Novella, as well as the figure work for the sacristy of the Duomo of Florence, in 1465. With Domenico del Tasso, he completed the famous work for the choir of the Cathedral at Perugia in 1491. Giuliano's brother, Benedetto, born in 1442, a worker of considerable fame, assisted Giuliano between the years 1475 and 1480 with the execution of those well-known doors of the "Hall of the Audience" in the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence, in which Dante and Petrarch are depicted. Many Venetian masters are renowned for their excellent work. Of the earlier workers preceding the



FIG. 65. SACRISTY CUPBOARD WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. TUSCAN, ABOUT 1450-60
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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FIG. 66. STANDING MIRROR FRAME. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

sixteenth century, Moranzone, Canozii, Cozzi, and Scalamanzo are perhaps the best known. Among those of the sixteenth century are Paolo Savin, who also designed the admirable bronzes in the Cappella Zeno (1507), Giorgio Veneziano to whom is attributed the work of the choir at Messina (1540), as well as Bernardino of Venice, frequently employed by the Estensi at Ferrara.¹

The most celebrated of all intarsia workers, Fra Giovanni da Verona (1457 to 1525), and Fra Damiano (1490 to 1549), are the authors of the most remarkable existing work. Pope Julius II called Fra Giovanni to Rome in the early years of the sixteenth century to execute the work in the Camera della Segnatura in the Vatican, the designs for which have been attributed to Raphael. Both Fra Giovanni and Fra Damiano were assisted by numerous brother monks.

The period of the finest Italian intarsia dates from 1475 to 1525. It reaches its climax in the perspective designs of Fra Giovanni da Verona and some of his contemporaries who laid designs composed of landscapes, vistas of cities, architecture, the human figure, naturalistic objects, and fanciful arabesques into the panels of wainscotings, choir stalls, and other furnishings in the most marvellous manner. The naturalistic effect was often heightened with colour obtained through treating the woods with dyes and chemicals. In the second half of the sixteenth century intarsia became less popular than carving, yet we have records of much work being done up to the year 1600.

¹Molmenti's "Venice—Arts Applied to Industry."



FIG. 67. SACRISTY CUPBOARD. TUSCAN, ABOUT 1460-75
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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In the seventeenth century it was confined almost exclusively to the embellishment of furniture.

As the design of the house precedes that of the furnishings, so the furniture design of the Early Renaissance naturally follows that of the architecture, to which it conforms. Although the Riccardi Palace at Florence was begun by Brunelleschi as early as 1430 and by 1450 a number of Early Renaissance palaces were under way, yet it was not until after the middle of the century that furniture designed in the new manner became general, and the earliest of these specimens were more often of ecclesiastical than domestic origin. By the middle of the century, especially in Tuscany and Umbria, the choir stalls, the Bishops' thrones, the pulpit, as well as the cupboards, table desks, and other furniture found in the sacristies, bore the imprint of the new classical style while the design for the furniture of the libraries, hospitals, and other public buildings of this period followed in like manner.

Though under the domination of ecclesiastical influence, the decided advancement in household comfort and luxury gave great impetus to the development of domestic furniture in the new style that was, in this period, confined almost exclusively to the princely palaces. The few domestic specimens produced during the middle of the century show a close resemblance to contemporary ecclesiastical design in their severe classic forms, enriched with a sparing but effective use of carving, sometimes combined with inlay of exquisite design, when they were not enhanced with gilding and colour. In much work done during the second half of the century there were still lingering traces of the Gothic in the interlacing patterns of inlay that occasionally appear associated with the most highly developed classic structure and carving of Renaissance design, as illustrated in the sacristy cupboards of Santa Croce shown in Figure 91.

With Tuscan furniture the study of Renaissance styles begins. As in architecture and the allied arts, it is in Tuscany that the furniture of the Early Renaissance palace finds its earliest and highest expression, for as her architectural masterpieces had become models for the architecture of that period so had her furniture design an equally wide range of influence. The cassone



FIG. 68. SACRISTY CUPBOARD. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

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was still the most important article of household furniture, but with the development of the credenza or side-board, its popularity began to wane. As early as the year 1466, in an old document giving an account of the Medici-Rucellai wedding feast, a credenza is mentioned placed against a background of tapestry on which shone gold and silver plate wrought by the best gold-

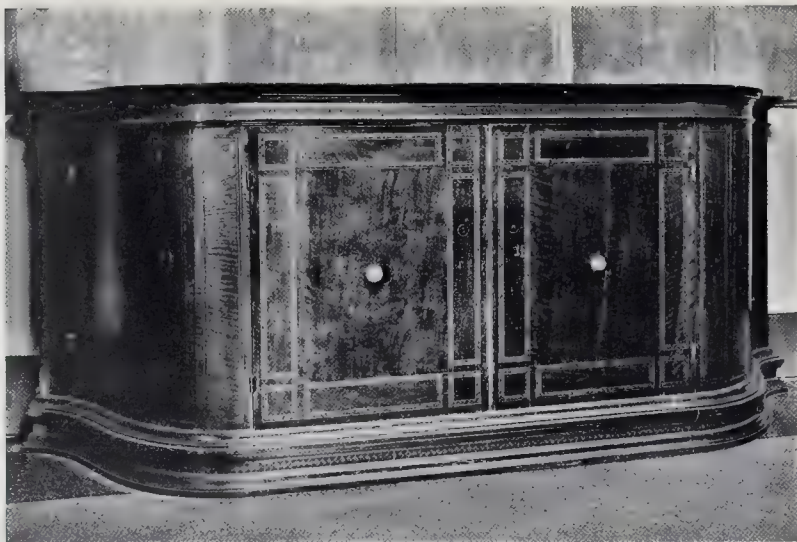


FIG. 69. SACRISTY CUPBOARD. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF BERNHARD BERENSON, ESQ., FLORENCE

smiths and silversmiths of Florence. It had evidently not come into general use as there are no examples of domestic origin existing from the Early Renaissance.

The Tuscan chest of the fifteenth century, the greatest treasure of all Italian furniture of this period, is of very simple form, having straight regular sides and a flat top. It rests on a simple and strongly moulded base that later in the century was sometimes raised on lion feet. The preference for inlay work in the first decades of the period encouraged this simple and beautifully proportioned form that occasionally had, added to its embellish-

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ments, moulds carved with simple classic ornament such as the egg and dart, the bead and the leaf. A few chests of this description were of higher form and, as we see in some contemporary paintings and wood-cuts, were occasionally used for tables. Of these practically none is known to exist. The most distinguished architects and painters of the day had flourishing shops where



FIG. 70. WRITING DESK. VENETIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MADAME ED. ANDRÉ, PARIS

many chests of this type, as well as those with fronts enriched with beautifully painted panels, were produced.

Many of the small coffer, known as cassette, that appeared in the mid-fifteenth century, had forms resembling those of the important cassoni. They were decorated with pastiglia, gold, and painting and were receptacles for jewels, fine laces, and other delicate luxuries.

The cassapanca, a combination seat and chest evolved from the chest and wall bench, made its appearance about the middle of the fifteenth century. It seems to have originated in Florence and to have been used exclusively



FIG. 71. CABINET WITH INLAY CERTOSINA WORK. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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there, where it was in fashion for over a century. It was raised on a dais with one or two steps and exhibited the same monumental character and serious craftsmanship that distinguished all Florentine furniture of this period. In all houses of the upper classes it occupied a prominent position in the living apartment, where, after being made more comfortable with soft cushions, it became the seat of ceremony for the master of the house. A similar piece known as the "panca di guardia," which occupied the place in the entrance hall that had been filled by the wall bench in earlier times, formed a seat for the attendants by day as well as a bed for the guards at night. The mattress when not in use was kept within the chest that formed the seat.

The stately throne seat with a high panelled back enriched with intarsia and carving, raised on two steps and placed under a canopy of velvet or other fine stuffs, was found in all the princely houses of Florence, where it was used for audiences or on other formal occasions by the rich patrician. A throne seat of this description is seen in Andrea del Sarto's "Birth of St. John" in the Church of the Annunziata at Florence.

Because of the scarcity of all chairs dating before the sixteenth century, it is necessary to resort to the old paintings, embroideries, and wood-cuts for facts regarding the construction and decoration of the Tuscan chair of this period. The sgabello, or stool chair, was much in evidence. It was constructed with three or four legs and a high narrow back that was usually ornamented in a simple manner with carving and intarsia. Stools constructed in the same manner were evidently numerous.

The only Tuscan arm chair seems to be that of the X form, popularly known as the "Sedia Dantesca" and the "Sedia Savonarola". It was used by the Florentines for a resting, dining, and writing chair.¹ Though none from this period exists, constructed of metal, yet a delicate one of this type that seems to be of bronze is seen in an old cassone panel painted as early as 1480. Late in the century wooden chairs of this structure seem to have been numerous

¹The Italian, who lived a great deal out of doors, found these folding chairs convenient to be carried in and out of the house or on to the "altana" or roof terrace. It has been said that in the sixteenth century the "Ponte Trinità" was reserved on summer evenings for the patricians, when these chairs were brought for them to enjoy the cool of the evening.

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and were upholstered in fine velvets and ornamental leathers. The arm chair of rectangular structure with high straight back and arms, arranged against the wall in formal Florentine rooms of the sixteenth century, may have been found in the last decades of the fifteenth century, but it was not in general use.

The trestle table was commonly used throughout the fifteenth century, but with the development of the Renaissance, one of monumental form with its top supported by two shaped ends resembling those of antique models, became an important adjunct to the decorative furniture of the Florentine palace. A few were of stone, but the majority were constructed of wood with a long stretcher braced between the end supports.

This large table, which is described and illustrated later, was never used for writing, a table of smaller form being used instead. In some of the old ecclesiastical illustrations writing tables are seen constructed with drawers on either side and with slanting tops resembling those of much later design. At the close of the century a small and delicately proportioned writing desk of very similar form was designed, that could be carried from room to room and might be placed on the tops of larger tables like the one shown in Figure 70. These were often inlaid with delicate designs, while at times they were covered with tooled leather and fine stuffs as they were in the first decades of the sixteenth century.

The still-existing smaller tables and centre tables dating from this period seem to be of Florentine design. They were generally made with round, hexagonal, and octagonal tops supported on a central shaft of vase forms, sometimes surrounded by other fanciful supports.

Hand mirrors had been used in the Middle Ages, but the wall mirror and the standing one (Figure 66) seem to have begun their development when the Gothic style gave way to the Renaissance. Tuscan wall mirrors, like all others at this time, were made of sheets of highly polished metal generally about twenty-five centimeters high and slightly less in width. The frames of rectangular form were richly and delicately carved and often heightened with gold. The harsh and unpleasant surface of the mirrors was usually concealed

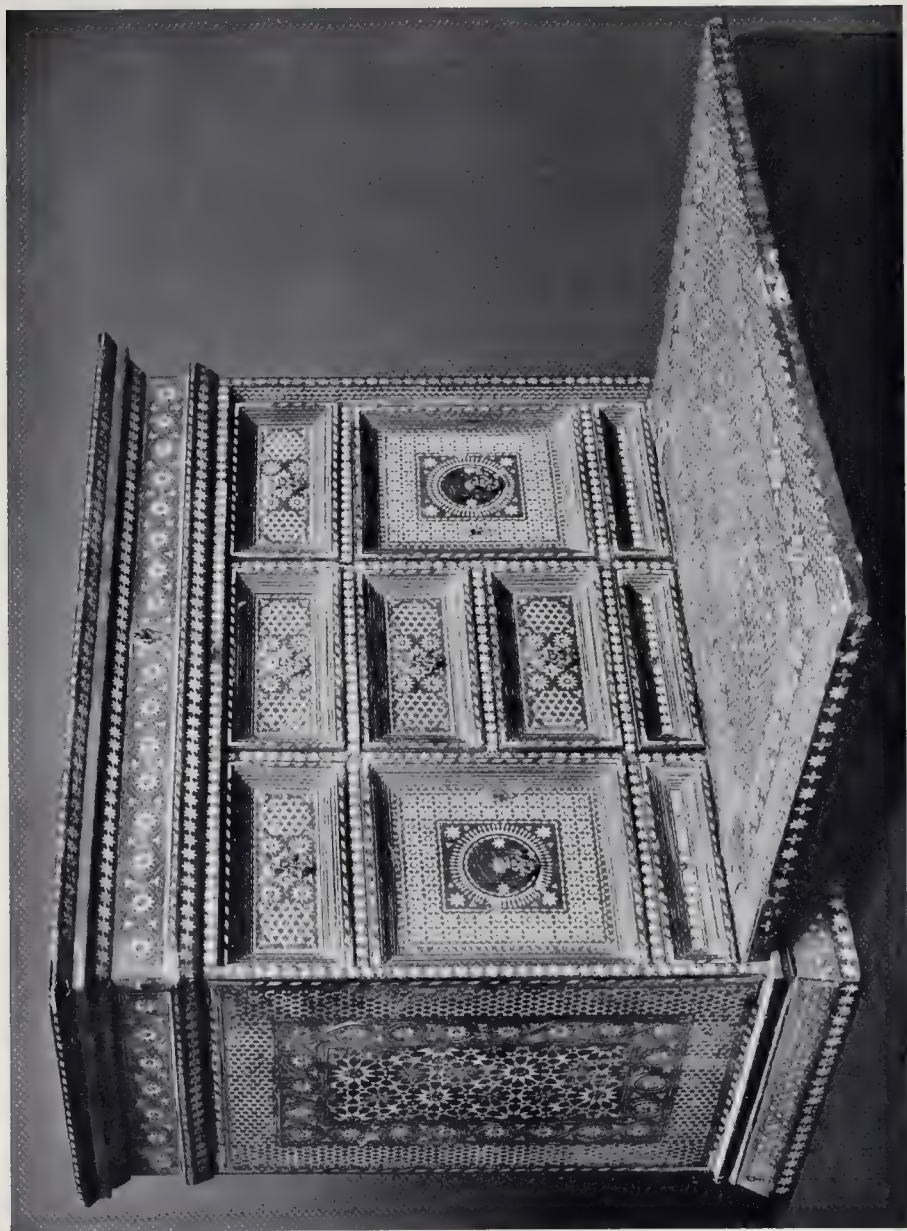


FIG. 72. INLAID CABINET, CERTOSINA WORK. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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behind sliding doors that were often decorated with painted designs. Their decorative value was obtained through the richly ornamented frame.

The Tuscan bed of the Early Renaissance was still raised on a predella or dais. It was of simple rectangular form decorated with a sparing use of intarsia and carving. The head and foot boards, which were more often composed of one large panel instead of the numerous smaller ones of the earlier style, were often crowned with classic cornices and flanked by pilasters. There are practically no beds of this style in existence, but in the old pictures a number are represented. In Figure 188 an especially fine one, with the baldachino, is portrayed in Ghirlandaio's fresco "The Birth of the Virgin" in the choir of Santa Maria Novella at Florence.¹

Venice, living in unrivalled splendour during the fifteenth century, did not begin building her palaces and designing her furniture in the new Renaissance style until late in the century. Much beautiful Gothic furniture was produced for her Gothic palaces up to the last three or four decades of the fifteenth century. Though her period of Early Renaissance activities was shorter than that of Florence and practically no articles of household furniture exist, still the luxury and highly developed domestic life of this period put her with Mantua, Ferrara, and Urbino in the second important place in the development of domestic styles.

As Venice escaped the devastating invasions that affected Lombardy so grievously, perhaps it was the great wealth of the Venetians, permitting them to indulge in the change of fashions, that accounts for the scarcity of her Early Renaissance furniture. "Omitting the ancients, no nation ever showed itself so insatiable in the matter of fashions as the Venetians at the epoch of their greatest splendour. France alone, and then only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, could rival Venice who had already so long preceded her in multiform and varying refinement of luxury."²

Because of the peculiar situation and the security of Venice, the Venetian house developed a distinctively different arrangement from that of the rest of Italy.

¹The keyhole in the dais is clearly visible proving that the tops were hinged and that it was used as a chest.

²Molmenti.

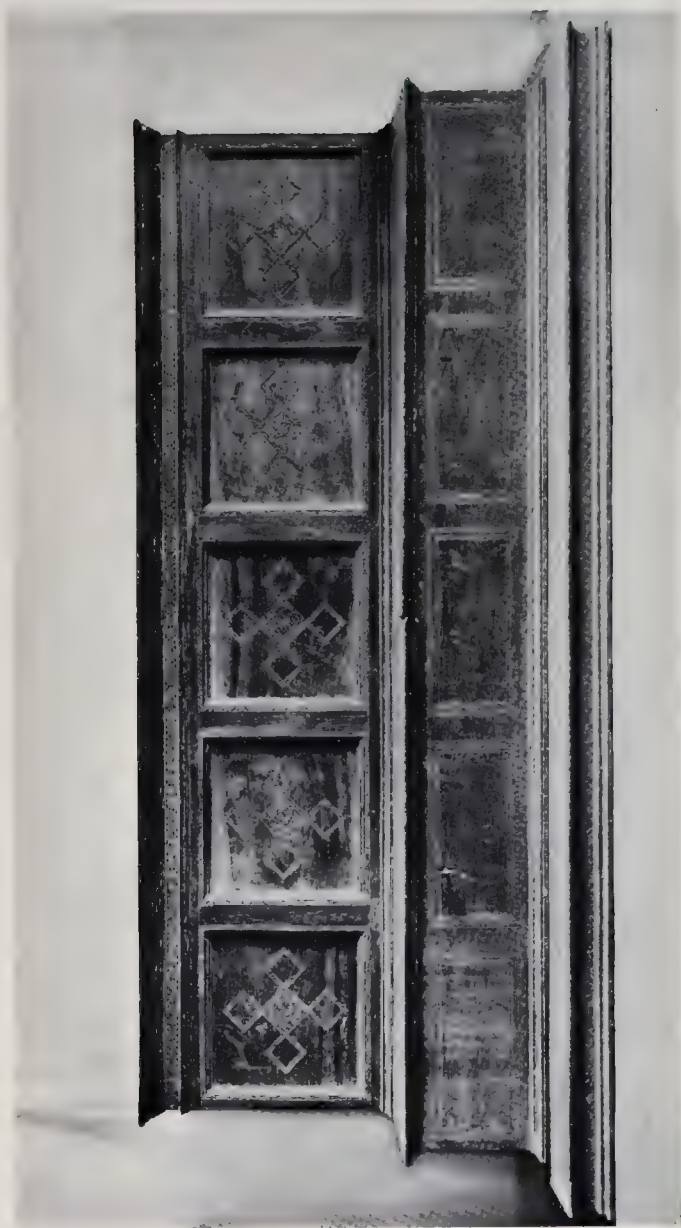


FIG. 73. HALL SEAT AND CHEST. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 74. SEAT WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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Simplicity and spaciousness mark the plan. On the first floor a long hall ran through the centre of the house, its main entrance being on a canal, while another of less importance opened on a street. Rooms opened from this hall on both sides while from one side the stairs ascended. Over the main entrance hall was the stately salon with high ceiling and pleasant windows opening on to the Grand Canal. On the same floor were the banqueting hall and other reception rooms, while the floor above was reserved for sleeping rooms. The furniture of the main salon, with its walls painted or hung with tapestries and ceilings both panelled and beamed, was rich with gold and colours. Its furniture consisted of panelled benches and cassoni ranged against the walls, occasionally including, toward the end of the century, a long table and a few chairs.

The cassone is the most important piece of decorative furniture found in the Venetian palace of the Early Renaissance. Though practically none is in existence to-day, we learn that they were often of a higher form, and served for tables on which were arranged objets d'art, books, and small caskets, or else they were of a lower form and were used for seats. The credenza that was found in the late fifteenth century Florentine interior was rarely used by the Venetian in this period. The cassone is recorded among the valued possessions of the patrician, where, in the numerous and careful inventories of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, we often find ten or more described, while chairs and tables are rarely mentioned, evidently because of their unimportant artistic value. The finer existing specimens from this province show a rich, delicate and evenly scaled rhythmic decoration of pastiglia work in the style of Antonio and Tullio Lombardi, with a surface entirely gilded. At the close of the century some were decorated with paintings and figures in low relief. Many of the higher forms that served as tables were, like the similar Florentine examples, embellished with intarsia. Though many of the Gothic period were elaborately carved it was not until after Sansovino's arrival that the carved wood examples of the Renaissance came into general fashion.

As chairs were rarely mentioned in the inventories and as practically none exists, at the present time, we may infer that they were neither numerous nor



FIG. 75. LECTERN. SIENESE, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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important until the sixteenth century. As early as the middle of the fifteenth century, when the Gothic style began to give way to the Renaissance, stools and seats found around the Venetian chimney pieces were made richer and more comfortable with cushions, both round and square, covered with fine fabrics. They were as numerous as they were unimportant. The bench was the ordi-



FIG. 76. SECTION OF PANELLING. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY

FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

nary seat of the Venetian in the fifteenth century. It often ran along the entire sides of entrance halls, while the same arrangement is pictured in the living apartment by the Early Renaissance painters, as in the illustration of Carpaccio's "The Dream of Saint Ursula" in Figure 103.

Venetian tables were of the trestle type and when in use were covered with table cloths of fine stuffs. A long narrow one of this description was used in the dining apartment. The long bench on which the diners sat ran along the wall and the table was placed in front of it, the other side being left free so that the food could be more easily served. It was not until the early six-

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teenth century that the long table of the Florentine type resembling antique models came into use.

The Venetian beds of the Early Renaissance, like the Tuscan example, were designed with panelled head and foot board and were invariably constructed on a *predella*. They were decorated with intarsia, painted designs, and gilding. By the middle of the fifteenth century beds in the Venetian palaces had feather mattresses, linen sheets, and counterpanes of silk and other fine stuffs.¹ About the same time we hear of "canopies of fantastic form, some with curtains of foliated embossed velvet and a starry firmament above ending in a kind of dome, others with columns and carved capitals." Near the bed stood the *priedieu* over which hung the carved wood shrine (*ancona*) with elaborate pinnacles and tracery, holding the Byzantine Madonna painted on a gold ground, or else a Venetian primitive. The imprint of the Middle Ages is still visible in all the furnishings of the room, where until the last two decades of the century there was a diffusion of Gothic and Renaissance detail.

There are no traces of a Venetian cupboard in the fifteenth century. Those let into the walls, with and without doors, as in medieval times, were evidently used as receptacles for books and household utensils, but toward the close of the Quattrocento the wall mirror, then a rare luxury, was in great demand by the Venetians. Like those of Florence they were made of small sheets of polished metal before which hung a little curtain of fine silk, in preference to the sliding door used by the Florentines. Though the Florentine mirror was invariably square, that of Venice was generally round with gilded frames elaborately decorated with arabesques of plant forms, both carved and in *pastiglia* work.

Of the numerous tapestries mentioned, the greater number were imported from Flanders, or perhaps from the flourishing looms of Ferrara, notwithstanding the fact that tapestries were woven at Venice during this period. The prevailing designs were a sort of Gothic Verdure with a coat of arms or some heraldic device. Many Asiatic carpets were to be found in the interiors and they were often depicted by the Early Renaissance painters, while in the

¹As early as the Dandolo inventory (1341) feather mattresses (*plumacii*) are mentioned.



FIG. 77. CARVED WOOD TABLE. FLORENTINE, LATE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

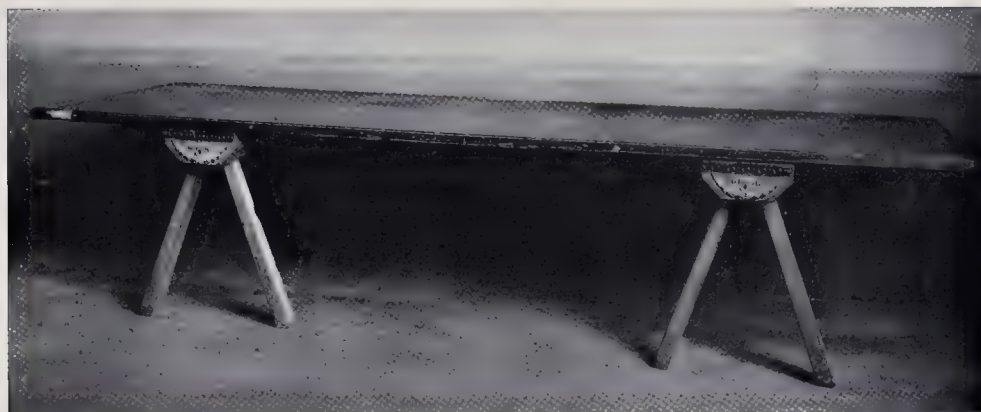


FIG. 78. TRESTLE TABLE. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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late fifteenth century leather carpets, "cuoio d'oro", with gold and blue tones predominating were known to have been used.

It is claimed that the furniture of Mantua and Ferrara retained an individual character during the greater part of the fifteenth century, but we have much proof that as the century advanced the influence of Venice was more and more felt. We are wholly indebted to the numerous and detailed records of the ducal houses, especially that of Ferrara, for the information we have regarding the magnificent furnishings of these palaces and villas. From the archives we learn how orders were constantly being executed in Venice, how a dinner service used at Isabella d'Este's wedding feast was made at Venice by the renowned goldsmith, Giorgio da Ragusa, after designs by Cosimo Tura; how in 1489 Ercole Roberti was sent to Venice to buy gold leaf and ultramarine to decorate a magnificent bed and thirteen marriage cassoni for the same distinguished lady, while quantities of fine stuffs used in the palaces and villas were ordered from Venetian looms.

So, too, the furniture of Lombardy showed the influence of the lagoon city, but because of the frightful invasions at the close of the fifteenth century scarcely a thing remains of the period, testifying to this fact. The few existing pieces preserved in the Museo del Castello and the Poldi Museum at Milan consist of chests belonging to the late fifteenth century and the first decades of the following century. In the neighbourhood of Pavia a distinctive type of furniture inlaid with ivory, bone, and light tones of wood was produced, similar to that made in Venice by the famous family of cabinet makers known as the Embracchi. Because of its manufacture in the neighbourhood of the Certosa di Pavia it became known as Certosina work. Whether or not it had its origin in Lombardy is still unsolved, though the strong eastern flavour of the work inclines one to credit it to Venice. The earliest Lombard examples dating from the late fifteenth century consist of a few chests and Savonarola chairs. Mirrors and small caskets are also to be found designed in this style.

Only rarely can the furniture of Liguria be traced back to the fifteenth century, while in Piemonte and Savoy the Gothic traditions which lasted into the sixteenth century naturally retarded the development of a Renaissance



FIG. 79. CARVED WOOD TABLE. FLORENTINE, END OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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FIG. 80. CARVED WOOD TABLE. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

style. As nothing remains of Roman furniture, from which a faint idea can be gained, the work of this section, like that of Bologna and the adjacent Marches, falls into the period of the High Renaissance.

The great strides made in classic study soon influenced and modified the design of the Early Renaissance cassone. The base and the crowning members often take on the appearance of contemporary architectural features while figure modelling shows a strong feeling of the antique. In certain northern provinces, however, and in the vicinity of Venice, the designer, seeming loath to depart from his Gothic traditions, often combined Renaissance and Gothic features in the manner illustrated in Figure 44. Though the general appearance of this chest is pre-Renaissance, the contour of the base mould and its ornamentation manifests a recognition of the classic revival. The square panels and the interlacing pattern of intarsia embellishing their stiles, are of Late Gothic character. Like all finer Venetian pieces of this period, the surface is richly covered with an evenly scaled decoration of intricate carving and inlay. Often

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they were further enriched with touches of gold and colours, the example illustrated showing traces of colour on the background of the carved parts.

Figure 45 illustrates a highly characteristic design of the Early Renaissance. It is undoubtedly one of those chests that were produced in the numerous architects' shops flourishing in Florence about that time. The front curves inward toward a moulded base resting on a sub-base with an inlay pattern of the classic fret. The spacing of the front into two horizontal panels, separated and flanked by narrow vertical ones, marks the next step in the evolution of the panel from those arranged in successive squares. The inlay pattern of the vertical panels, as well as the simple border, are reminiscent of those persistent pre-Renaissance motifs.

The chest of low rectangular form common to Lombardy and parts of Venetia continued in these provinces long after the sarcophagus form had been made popular in Tuscany and Rome. Those of the early years of the Renaissance often retain the square panels of intarsia framed with stiles ornamented

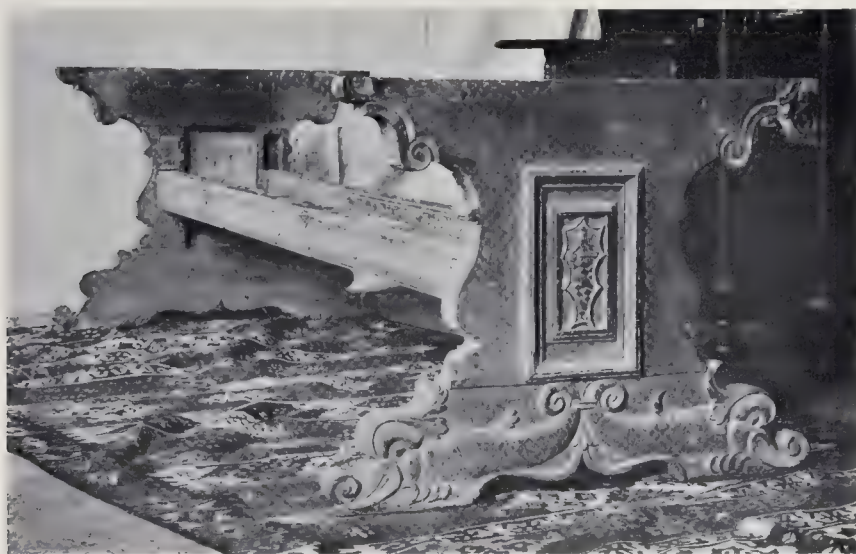


FIG. 81. CARVED WOOD TABLE. LOMBARDY OR VENETIA, ABOUT 1500
FROM THE COLLECTION OF ANTONIO SALVADORI, VENICE

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FIG. 82. CARVED WOOD TABLE. LATE XV CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PAYNE WHITNEY, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

with bands of the same; as in former work, however, they sometimes show the classic influence in moulds which are, at times, carved with classic motifs as well as in the lion feet on which they are occasionally raised. One of this character preserved in the Museo Civico at Milan has a succession of panels filled with intarsia showing, in perspective, castellated palaces that are in a style contemporary with them. This mode of architecture, as well as the medieval styles in furniture, persisted longer in Lombardy. It must be recalled that the famous "Castello" at Milan, built in this style, was not begun until 1450 by Francesco Sforza and was not completed until long after the famous palaces of Florence, Bologna, and Siena had been erected in the classic manner. Figure 47 is a Tuscan chest contemporary with the northern type just described and shows how much farther advanced the Florentine designer was in

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classical rendering. It exhibits simplicity of form enhanced with decoration, every detail of which has received the most careful architectural consideration, evincing the scholarship of that classic city.

Figure 48 is one of the early attempts at rendering classical subjects in pastiglia. It undoubtedly comes from a cassone of simple rectangular form that had its inception in Tuscany. Following, in Figures 49 and 50, is a pair of gilded marriage cassoni of magnificent form, over three feet high, depicting classical subjects through the medium of the finest pastiglia work in exceptionally high relief. The drawing and rendering of the modelling which has been attributed to Pallajuolo (1429-1496), besides being a credit to that master, is worthy of a more permanent substance than this plaster composition. Allegorical subjects are portrayed on both; in Figure 49 are "Bacchus and Ariadne" in a triumphal car drawn by winged gryphons in a procession with Bacchante, Satyrs, and Fauns headed by Pan; in a similar manner is represented "The Rape of Proserpine" in Figure 50. In each the panels are flanked by winged sphinxes holding small red shields on which are gold cross bars, while at the top and bottom are borders formed of a band of raised rosettes and leaf ornaments in gold on a blue ground. Both of these cassoni were included in the sale of the Palazzo Davanzati collection.

Distinguished painters were employed to decorate the cassoni of fine quality throughout the Renaissance. Two panels attributed to Pisanello (1380-1456), originally designed for a pair of marriage cassoni, are shown in Figure 51. They portray a delightful confusion of pageantry and classical subjects, medieval and Renaissance architecture, in a manner that suggests the environment of Ferrara during the rule of Niccolo III and his son Leonello d'Este, for whom Pisanello did much work. Panels of this character were inserted in the fronts of cassoni in much the same manner as in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, but in architectural settings of more classical design. One of the finest of this description, fortunately in its original condition and well preserved, is illustrated in Figure 52. Coming originally from the Strozzi Palace at Florence, it reflects the stateliness of its native environment. The characteristic Early Renaissance form is embellished with moulds and

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brackets profusely but simply carved with recognized classic motifs, the whole being gilded. In the last decade of the fifteenth century the preference for carving over inlay and pastiglia modelling becomes increasingly noticeable.

Painted panels were inserted in various ways as illustrated in Figures 54, 54A, and 55, all of which are representative of designs that prevailed in Lombardy and Venetia and especially in Mantua, Ferrara, and Verona during the last years of the fifteenth and the early years of the sixteenth centuries. They illustrate the popularity of the low rectangular form with richly ornamented moulds and fronts spaced into three rectangular panels, separated by ornamental shafts inspired by antique forms, or divided by narrow vertical panels composed of plant forms. The practice of inserting painted panels and decorating moulds, panels, and frames with delicately modelled pastiglia, continued in these sections long after it had been abandoned in Tuscany and Rome. Small circular panels like those attributed to B. Mantegna, in Figure 54 and those of rectangular form, as well as an occasional combination of both, appear in the few examples we have of these chests. When tops were raised on concave moulds, in the manner of those seen on high Tuscan chests, they were less prominent, as in Figure 54A. Figures 57 and 58A, are practically the only variations of the rectangular form, the last named being ornamented in the style that prevailed in the vicinity of Venetia between the years 1495 and 1510.

Late in the fifteenth century the elaborately carved wood cassoni, with a form and decoration inspired by the antique sarcophagi, made their appearance and in the sixteenth century soon supplanted the rectangular example with its delicate pastiglia and painted decorations. One of the earliest of this type, showing a design of considerable classic purity, is shown in Figure 58. This High Renaissance example belonging to the last years of the fifteenth century precedes the bold and coarser type, with mythical figures and grotesques, that was so popular in Rome during the first thirty years of the sixteenth century.

The arched top coffer dating about 1500, covered with green velvet patterned in red, illustrated in Figure 56, undoubtedly fulfilled the function of transporting some patrician's gorgeous array and when strapped to the back



FIG. 83. UMBRIAN TABLE, LATE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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FIG. 84. FLORENTINE CENTRE TABLE. SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF OTTO H. KAHN, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

of a mule covered with cloth of gold or damask, formed part of a pageant-like procession bound on a festive journey.

Most of the candlesticks and candelabra dating from this period are of ecclesiastical origin, though they and the lantern of metal and carved wood, as well as the torch, were used to illuminate the domestic interior of the Renaissance. The finest ones of this period show an originality in the adaptation of the antique, as illustrated in Figures 59 and 60. Of the two, Figure 59 is of slightly earlier date and exhibits a more original combination of forms, while the latter follows closely an antique model. Figure 62 is a bronze model of the school of Verrocchio, which, when compared with the cast taken from a Roman antique, figured in 63, gives some idea of its close resemblance to the classic design. The general forms of the bases are almost identical, while the

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FIG. 85. CENTRE TABLE. BOLOGNA, LATE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

winged figures ending in lion feet, placed at the angles of the base and those of the ram heads at the angles above, convince one how freely the designer copied parts of ancient models. The shaft is composed of vase forms in the antique manner. Figure 61, from the same source, is of carved and gilded wood. Its base has a form resembling those of some metal specimens designed in the transition style about the middle of the century. The bronze candelabrum from the capitol della Cattedrale at Pistoia, dating about 1475, is of the highest expression. It is a graceful composition, the parts of which, especially the triangular base and the vase form of the shaft, are taken directly from classic forms (Figure 64).

The sacristy cupboard of the Early Renaissance is the forerunner of the credenza. Though all furniture design of this era is strongly influenced by

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ecclesiastical furnishings that of the credenza or domestic cupboard, especially the Tuscan, though less important in scale and design, bears the closest resemblance to its ecclesiastical contemporary. Two sacristy cupboards of the



FIG. 86. FLORENTINE CENTRE TABLE. SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

highest order, one with canted corners and the other with concave corners, illustrated in Figures 65 and 67, are of very similar character, while both are enriched with intarsia of almost identical design. The finer cupboards, like the chests decorated in this style, are of simple but well-proportioned forms with few and unobtrusive moulds and have large planes of undisturbed surface

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that force the decorative value of the delicate and intricate inlay. The arrangement of large vertical panels separated by narrower vertical ones begins with the Renaissance and is generally found in panelling designs in Tuscany,



FIG. 87. CENTRE TABLE. EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

Emilia, parts of Umbria and the Marches after 1450 and in provinces more remote from Tuscany after 1475. The inlay pattern, used to decorate the narrow vertical panels in both of these examples, was evidently a favourite one as it appears repeatedly between the years 1450 and 1475.

A repetition of the form illustrated in 67 appears in Figure 69, the doors

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of which are panelled in the characteristic manner, without the moulds. The design is exceptionally free of moulds, they being employed only to emphasize the base and cornice and the two narrow vertical panels to which the doors are hinged. In similar compositions of later work the pilaster, fluted, panelled, and decorated with arabesque, is substituted for the narrow vertical panel, giving a more architectural appearance to the design. This is illustrated in the sacristy cupboard dating from the last decade of the fifteenth century shown in Figure 68. Moulds grew more prominent with the introduction of the fluted pilaster and carved decorations. This cabinet is finished on all sides in the same manner.

Figures 71 and 72 are illustrations of the so-called "Certosina work". Writing cabinets built in two bodies, as in Figure 71, appear to have been popular, decorated in this style. Figure 72 was without doubt raised on a similar form. As it is difficult to distinguish the work done near Pavia from that of the Embracchi these examples may easily be accredited to either, yet the older Venetian pieces antedate the earliest Lombard pieces about a century. The examples illustrated have the appearance of work dating from the last decade of the fifteenth century when the industry was flourishing near Pavia, for which reason one is inclined to credit them to Lombardy. Though all specimens ornamented in this manner have a very similar appearance the designs differ considerably. The furniture forms are always simple, with large smooth surfaces for the distribution of the ornament, while the moulds are few and modest. On some of the larger pieces, especially the chests, large naturalistic motifs composed of vases of flowers in fine line decoration are seen.

The wall bench raised on a dais, evolved from the cassone, so often found in the Tuscan interior of the Early Renaissance, is illustrated in Figure 73. The chest which forms the seat has two hinged tops and a front divided into oblong panels outlined with bands of inlay, while the whole is raised on a projecting moulded base in the form of a dais. The back with its square moulded panels and geometrical forms of inlay, framed with stiles ornamented with bands of the same, is characteristic of early work and indicates a date in the early years of the first period of the Renaissance. The back is



FIG. 88. CENTRE TABLE. FROM THE MARCHES. ABOUT 1500
 FIG. 89. FLORENTINE CENTRE TABLE. ABOUT 1500
 FROM THE EARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 90. CHOIR STALLS. ABOUT 1505. BY FRA GIOVANNI DA VERONA
FROM MONTE OLIVETO, SIENA



FIG. 91. A SECTION OF PANELLING. SECOND HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE SACRISTY OF SANIA CROCE, FLORENCE

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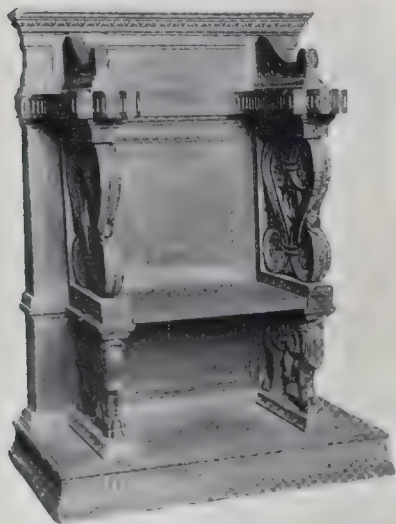


FIG. 92. SECTION OF CHOIR SEATS. SECOND
HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

crowned with a cornice the parts and arrangement of which evince classic recognition, while the design of the intarsia frieze recalls that of the Cosmatesque school. Figure 74 is perhaps of a few years later, as its oblong panels separated by intarsia-decorated pilasters with modified Corinthian capitals, would suggest. Inlay patterns with vase forms, arabesques composed of leaf and flower motifs and grotesques, as shown in the two end panels of this illustration, soon succeeded in the second half of the fifteenth century the abstract motifs of earlier work. The moulded base

still retains an early pattern of inlay, while the centre panel of the back, with its monastic scene depicting figures against an architectural background in perspective, marks its source as well as its date.

Trestle tables are extremely rare, yet from the frequency of their appearance in the old pictures we may infer that they were numerous. They consisted of a long board laid on trestles and being thus detachable, they have been more easily destroyed. Figure 78, one of the few in existence, designed to be placed against a wall, has carved on the trestles the arms of the Strozzi family from whose Florentine palace it originally came. Figure 77 is a modification of the preceding, of more permanent structure with a richer decorative treatment. Though found in Florence and claimed to be of Florentine origin, it has the appearance of the much-used Venetian table of that type of which no examples are known to survive from this period.

The monumental Tuscan table illustrated in Figure 79, with a top supported

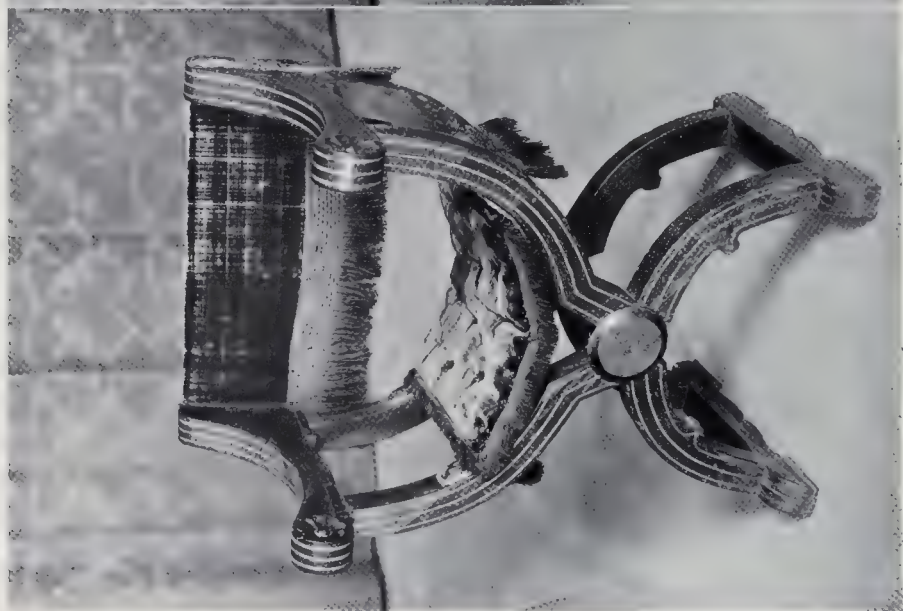


FIG. 93. DANTE CHAIR. TUSCAN, ABOUT 1490-1500

FROM THE COLLECTION OF PHILIP LEHMAN, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

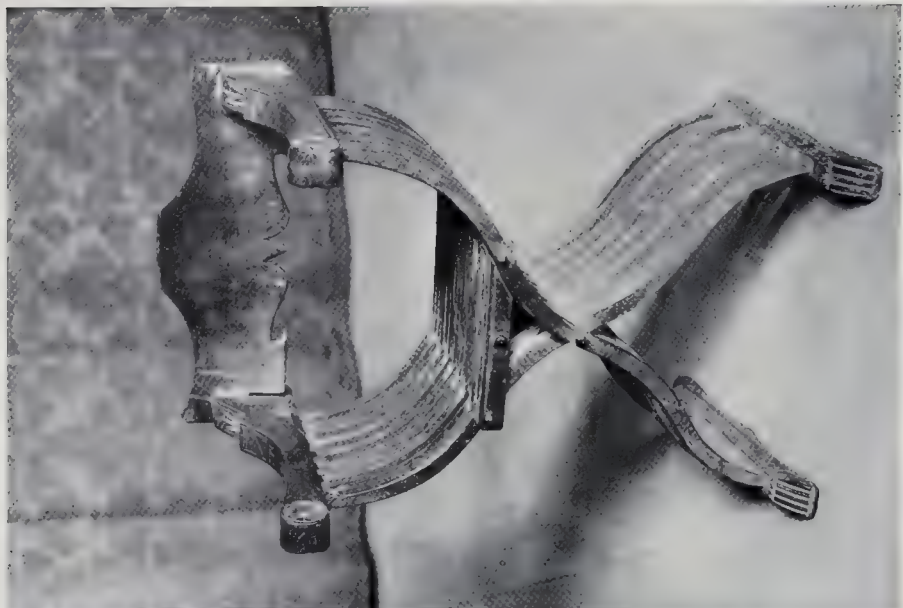


FIG. 94. SAVONAROLA CHAIR. TUSCAN, LATE XV CENTURY



FIG. 95. SAVONAROLA CHAIR
ABOUT 1500

FROM THE COLLECTION OF PHILIP LEHMAN, 1804, NEW YORK CITY

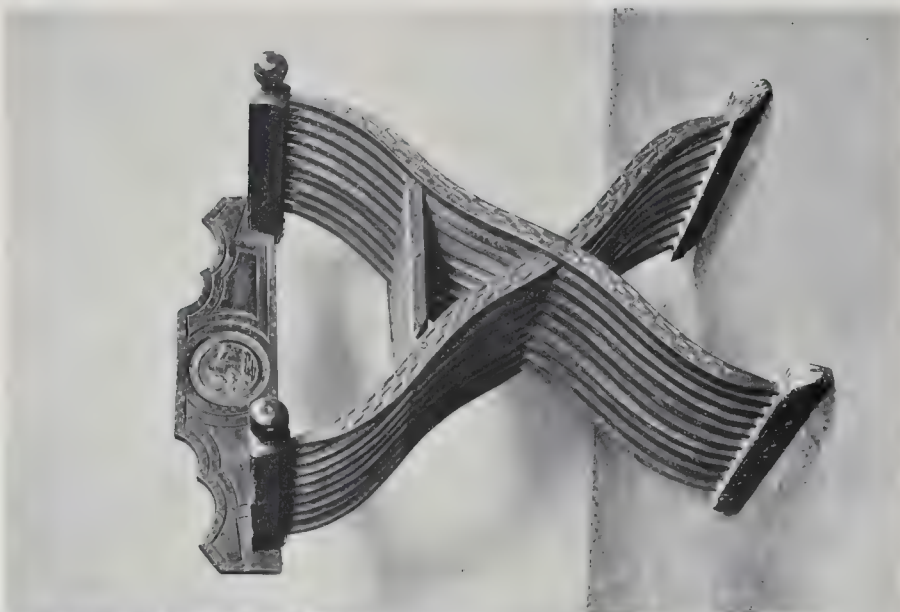


FIG. 96. SAVONAROLA CHAIR. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF
OF THE XV CENTURY

FROM THE MUSEO DI S. MARCO, FLORENCE

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on ends inspired by antique models, is a type that was used in the important Florentine rooms from about 1475 on through the first part of the High Renaissance. The two lion feet of each of its ends terminate in the leaf from which spring scrolls, the simple lines of which contrast strangely with the disturbed curves of the ornamental stretcher designed in the Baroque style of about thirty-five years later, when it was probably substituted



FIG. 97. VENETIAN INTERIOR, OF VARIOUSLY COLOURED MARBLES. PAINTED BY PENNACCHI, ABOUT 1500

for the original one. Tables of this style made their appearance much later at Venice and in the northern provinces. The first of these usually exhibit less of the antique influence, as illustrated in Figures 81 and 143. In the former the stretcher seems of later date, the original probably being in the form of the foregoing and constructed in the same manner. The projecting moulds that frame the panels bearing the arms, let into each end, are of later character and these may have been inserted when the present stretcher was substituted. Figure 82 has ends resembling designs adapted from the antique by the school of Verrocchio and when compared with Figure 63 its source is easily discerned. The crude stretcher secured with wooden pins, in marked contrast with the elaborate carving, was generally used in the construction of tables of this style.

Pedestal and centre tables, though they began their development late in the fifteenth century, are seldom found dating from this period. Figure 84, of finely proportioned rectangular form, with simple panelling and a top inlaid with a geometrical pattern, is one of the rarest and most authentic of the



FIG. 98. SGABELLO. END OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE MUSÉE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS



FIG. 99. SGABELLO. URBINO, ABOUT 1500
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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earlier type and comes from the Florentine palace of the Martelli family.¹ It precedes by some twenty years the following circular table displaying the vogue of the antique in the carved acanthus leaf decoration of the pedestal and the lion feet of the bases. Next to the trestle type, the smaller centre table is perhaps the most rare of this period. That these tables received their share of



FIG. 100. TWO SGABELLI. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. JOHN INNES KANF, NEW YORK CITY

artistic attention is evinced by the Florentine example designed about 1475, shown in Figure 86. The octagonal top, supported by a centre shaft turned in the manner of the late fifteenth century, is surrounded by four other shafts in the form of Early Renaissance dolphins, resting on bases that terminate in carved leaf decorations.

Though numerous, there are few authentic tables of the design illustrated in Figures 87, 88, and 89. Many have been incorrectly constructed from parts of old choir stalls and other fragments, while others are modified or direct

¹On this table for at least a generation stood the famous Donatello bust now in the Widener collection, Philadelphia.

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copies of the few originals. The design is typical of the Marches, where practically all of those that have come into the Florentine market originated. With the exception of the round top which was more rarely used, these three examples show nearly all of the varieties of this type. The hexagonal top is occasionally seen, but the octagonal form is more commonly found. They



FIG. 101. SGABELLO. TUSCAN, SECOND
HALF OF THE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 102. STOOL CHAIR. LOMBARDY,
LATE XV CENTURY
FROM THE BAGATTI VALSECCHI COLLECTION, MILAN

vary only slightly in size, being generally one metre wide and one metre high. Figure 89 is evidently a Florentine model, as its fine classic forms and serious craftsmanship suggest. Figure 88 is supported on three of the same radiating consoles ending in lion feet and undoubtedly comes from the Ancona Marches that were, especially in the northern part, under the direct influence of Florentine art from the beginning of the Renaissance.

Figure 93 is a late fifteenth century example of the popular "Dante chair", which came from the Davanzati Palace collection. It is decorated

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with simple bands of light-toned inlay following its structural lines, while the terminals of the arms are carved with rosettes. Though not the original covering, the contemporary red velvet of the back and seat illustrates the growing tendency for richer upholstery and more elaborate trimmings. Its contemporary of more complicated structure, the Savonarola chair, is illustrated in Figures 94, 95, and 96; of these the design of the last appears to be of the earliest date. Because it is said to have been used by Savonarola, the chair of

this structure receives its romantic name.

The stool chairs, or sgabelli, pictured in Figures 98, 99, and 100, varying only slightly in their decorations, are typical of a form found in the vicinity of Urbino and are probably some of the numerous ones designed for the Ducal Palace which attained its highest state of artistic perfection at the same time that intarsia work reached its finest expression.

Besides the beautiful wainscot-



FIG. 103. LATE XV CENTURY VENETIAN BEDROOM.
CARPACCIO

ings and doors, we know that this palace at one time contained furniture embellished with intarsia of the highest order. The sgabello shown in Figure 101 is of an earlier date than those just preceding it. Backs designed in this manner are of slightly earlier origin than the more common fan-shaped ones. The construction of Figure 102, with a cruder type of northern decoration, is derived from the three-legged Gothic stool. A few earlier Tuscan models also are found constructed in this way.

As there are practically no beds in existence dating from this period it is necessary to resort to contemporary pictures and inventories for study. Throughout the century all Italian beds were raised on a dais in a manner similar to

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that illustrated in Figure 43 of the preceding chapter. The later and more important examples are always pictured with canopies. A Venetian bed of this description is seen in Carpaccio's "Dream of Saint Ursula", painted about 1490 and illustrated in Figure 103. The bed-chamber is evidently that of a patrician. The bed has a canopy supported on four slender, gracefully turned shafts, while the head board with its pediment and cornice exhibits a highly developed Renaissance design. The dais seems to be ornamented with intarsia. That the accessories of the Venetian bed at that early date received careful attention is evinced by the rich coverlid and decorative details of the neat sheets and pillow covers. Carpaccio depicts another bed-chamber of a more modest household in his "Nativity of the Virgin". The bed, which is placed in an alcove with hangings, is raised on a predella or dais and shows a fine coverlid with neat linen. The floor of the room is tiled with squares of alternating values, the walls are panelled, while the part leading into the alcove where the bed is placed appears to have a wainscoting of intarsia. There is a well ordered artistic sense about the whole of this interior of the well-to-do borghese.



FIG. 104. INTERIOR, SHOWING LATE XV CENTURY BED. LORENZO DI CREDI

In Figure 104 a contemporary Tuscan bed with voluminous hangings, raised on a predella, can be seen in an interior painted by Lorenzo di Credi about 1510. Beds of this character were hung with various materials; besides those of silk and velvet recorded in Venetian inventories we learn from the archives that in the early years of the Renaissance the Duchess of Ferrara, wife of Niccolo III, had a grand bed hung with arras, undoubtedly supplied by the then flourishing looms of that city.




FIG. 105. CASSONE WITH GILDED PASTIGLIA DECORATIONS. LOMBARDY OR VENETIA, EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

CHAPTER III

THE HIGH RENAISSANCE

THE FIRST HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

HE High Renaissance reached its zenith in the first thirty years of the sixteenth century and was turbulent with artistic and historic activities. The art of this period is the culmination of that movement begun by the giant forerunners of the preceding century who had bent their energies to mastering the big principles of their art, preparing the way for the refining and enriching work of the more gentle masters of the early sixteenth century.

In the first forty years of this century, the most perfect buildings of the Renaissance were reared. It was the age of Bramante, Giulio Romano, and Peruzzi; Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo. Architecture perfected; and painting, sculpture, and the lesser decorative arts raised to their supreme effort, were combined in the most splendid monuments of art, in which the grand manner dominated, a delicate charm determining subordinate parts. Domes were noble, façades imposing, loggias elegant, and the decoration of the interiors splendid, while the furniture was as dignified and rich as the architectural background to which it was so closely allied. Yet with all the delicacy of detail and finished craftsmanship there were still a vigour of handling, a facility of composition, a richness of modelling and, above all, an artistic reserve in the architecture and furniture design of this period.

The peace and prosperity of the last decades of the fifteenth century, augmented by the impelling enthusiasm of the age, had given such force to the development of Renaissance art that the frightful invasions could not impede its progress until it had spent its energies in the endeavour for perfection. The famous Florentine historian Guicciardini (1482-1540), in writing of this

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age, tells us that "since the fall of the Roman Empire Italy had never known such great prosperity nor had experienced so desirable a condition as in the year 1490 and the years just before and after. The country had been brought to profound peace and tranquillity; agriculture had spread over the roughest and most sterile hills no less than over the most fertile plains; and Italy, subject to no dominion but her own, abounded in men, merchandise, and



FIG. 106. CASSONE WITH PAINTED DECORATIONS. VENETIAN OR LOMBARD
EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

wealth. She was embellished to the utmost by the magnificence of many princes, by the splendour of many most noble and beautiful cities, by the seat and majesty of religion; she was rich in men most apt in public affairs, and in minds most noble for all sorts of knowledge. She was industrious and excellent in every art, and, according to the standards of these days, not without military glory."

In this period of prosperity, luxury, and pleasure, followed by moral and military degeneration, the philosophy of Plato was still emotionally exalted by the few idealists, but the claims of antiquity as well as the pursuit of wealth dominated the decorative materialism of the age. The Church embraced the culture and

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ideals of the age, her court at Rome becoming as much absorbed in the satisfying of human ambition, the desire for culture, and the gratification of the senses as were its worldly flocks. Religion offered her highest in decoration and ritual, which was accepted because it added to the splendour and interest of life. "The general level of existence was easy, and life was debonair, even for the poorest. Italy whirled on, joyous, beautiful, enamoured of herself, of life and



FIG. 107. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE

all its pleasures; her politicians schemed their petty victories; her soldiers fought their mimic wars; her scholars crowned her with the glories of her marvellous renaissance; and no voice warned her of approaching ruin until the despoilers were actually within her gates."¹

The art of this era, decidedly more social than that of the Early Renaissance, contributed even more of its riches to the aggrandizement of the "Magnificent Ones" as well as to the strengthening of the "policy of culture" of the Papacy. In the former period social expression was under the influence of the ecclesiastical, but with the Cinquecento, secular expression dominated and by the end of the century, even in ecclesiastical work, beauty

¹Cambridge Historical Series. "Italy, 1494-1790." Vernon. p. 17.

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of line, form, and colour were considered a sufficient symbol of holiness. Art ennobled the luxury of life. The social functions of the patrician as well as the ritual and festivals of the Church were embellished by the greatest masters, while the dwellings of the princes fall within the domain of the history of art, their palaces and country houses embodying the triumphs of architecture and the allied arts.

Florence—with her ease and luxury, her cultivated society, with its high aesthetic and literary development since Dante's time—still manifested her innate classic taste. After the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, however, and during the rule of the weak, vain, and idle Piero—which was followed by unrest and a lack of security culminating in the suppression of Florentine liberty by Cosimo I—the best of her artistic energies were contributed first to the brilliant court of Milan, and afterward to the Papacy.

The art of Milan and Lombardy during the reign of the intellectual and unmoral Ludovico Sforza, reached its highest state of development a few years after the death of the magnificent Lorenzo when Lombardy became the most active centre of the arts of that period. Ludovico, artist and social reformer, man of science and letters, greatly increased the wealth and prosperity of his duchy by experiments with vast irrigation schemes and new methods of cultivation, also widening streets and improving the condition of houses in all the cities of his provinces. His great wealth and love of magnificent display, together with the cultivated taste of his patrician duchess, Beatrice d'Este, did much to attract to their court artists of great renown who decorated their apartments with painting, sculpture, rare tapestries, and magnificent furniture. Leonardo and Bramante were at the command of Beatrice to paint amorini on her chimney piece, to design mythological friezes for her chamber, and to lay out lovely gardens and build pavilions for her. Every detail of the social life of this court was invested with splendour and it seemed to Baldassare Castiglione that around the Castello at Milan was centred "the flower of the human race". Never was Milan so prosperous and glorious as when, a few years after Beatrice's death (1497), the French invasions brought to a sudden end the extravagant and splendid court of Ludovico. The impetus of Lombard



FIG. 108. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 109. CARVED WOOD CASSONE PARTLY GILDED. ROMAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF DUVEEN BROTHERS, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 110. CARVED WOOD CASSONE PARTLY GILDED. ROMAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PHILIP LEHMAN, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. III. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. ROMAN, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE



FIG. II2. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. FLORENTINE, MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 113. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. ROMAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE KUNST-GEWERBEMUSEUM, BERLIN

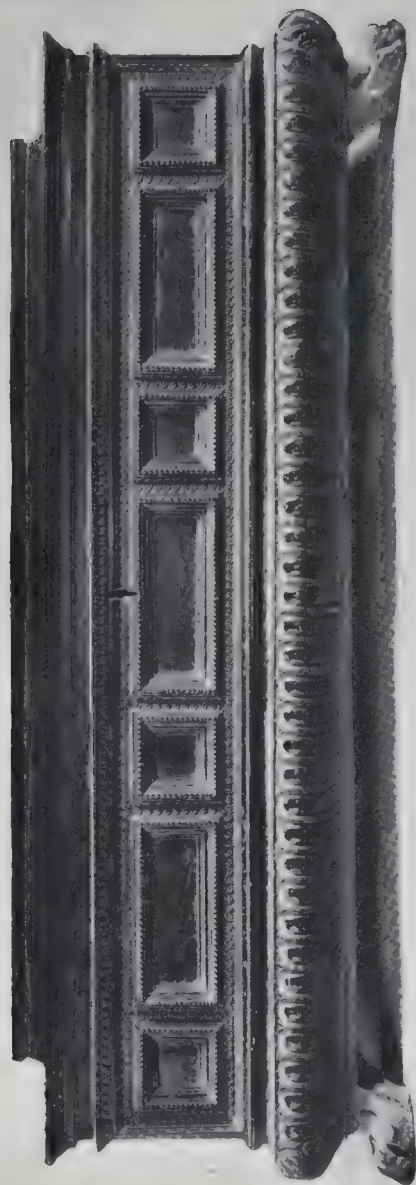


FIG. 114. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. TUSCAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE CASTELLO DI VINGIGLIATA, NEAR FLORENCE

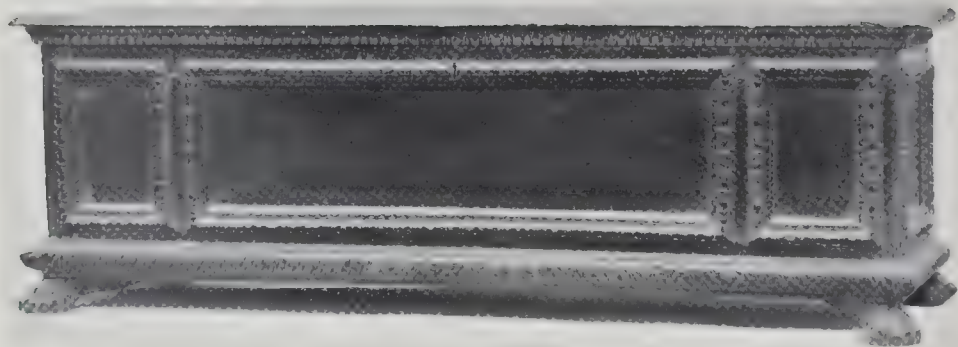


FIG. 115. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. FLORENTINE, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 116. SIENESE CASSONE. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

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art being naturally arrested, the artistic and literary refugees of the second great art centre of the Renaissance found their way to the courts of Mantua and Ferrara and afterward to Rome, the magnet for the ambitious. During the reign of Ludovico's heirs, up to the annexation of the Duchy by the Spanish crown, Milan was tossed between Francis I and Charles V.

At the court of Mantua the art of the High Renaissance found its most sympathetic and enthusiastic patron in Isabella d'Este, the Duchess of Mantua. Rarified by Renaissance legend, materialized by d'Annunzio, and called by Niccolò da Correggio the first lady of the world, Leonardo and Titian painted her portrait, Mantegna decorated her rooms, Aldo Manuzio sent her his new editions of the classics as soon as they were printed, and Ariosto read her the first draft of his "*Orlando Furioso*." Mantua had long been ranked high among the seats of culture and aristocratic social life, but with the coming of Isabella it became not only the centre of the greatest taste and refinement of this period, "the envy of the civilized world", but the criterion of fashion as well.

Toward the end of the century Isabella abandoned the medieval fortress, the Castello Vecchio, after she had done much to dispel the ancient gloom by remodelling and adding to its furnishings fine works of art. She then took up her residence in the old Palazzo Bonaccolsi,¹ where—with the assistance and advice of artists no less famous than Mantegna, Lorenzo Costa, Perugino, and Cristoforo Romano—she transformed the old structure into one of the most famous palaces of the High Renaissance, second only to that of the court at Urbino. It was here that she arranged the famous "Grotto", that suite of apartments with a cortile where fountains played, where Renaissance princes, artists, and connoisseurs came to admire and testify to the rarity and beauty of the treasures that adorned it. We learn from her letters, preserved in the Archivio Gonzaga, that from 1495 to 1539 this lady of the High Renaissance never ceased to search with diligent ardour for everything that would satisfy her dilettantism. Besides the furniture she ordered for the Palace she collected rare tapestries, pictures by the greatest masters,

¹This palace, known as the Corto Vecchio, became the nucleus of the vast Reggia.

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precious crystals, antique marbles, enamels, musical instruments, and manuscripts.

After the death of Duke Francesco I (1519) Giulio Romano was ordered to alter for her a wing in the castle, to be arranged for living apartments, in addition to those most perfect and famous interiors of the Renaissance, the "Appartamento Paradiso". These were three small jewel-like rooms, the symphonic work of painter, wood carver, and intarsia worker of the early sixteenth century. The exquisite, carved-wood ceilings are still intact, while the music room retains even more of its original beauty. Its well-preserved ceiling is diagonalled with carved bands with pendant-like rosettes placed at the intersections, forming panels that enclose delicate foliage and emblems on a blue ground. Less fortunate is the wainscoting, retaining only parts of its intarsia executed by Antonio and Paolo della Mola, above which were once inserted, in exquisite rectangular panels, masterpieces by Mantegna, Perugino, and Lorenzo Costa, treasures now hanging in the "Italian Gallery" of the Louvre. But of the furniture, tapestries, and other objets d'art of these apartments, not a piece is known to exist. As Professor Bode says, this is the more regrettable because from the records we know that during the prosperity of these ruling houses a great deal of their furnishing was produced with the assistance of the best artists, who were more occupied with furniture, art handicrafts, and even the wardrobes of the lords and ladies and their suites, than they were in producing paintings and sculpture. Even artists like Cosimo Tura and Dosso Dossi at one time painted beds, designed decorative trappings for the mounts, and arranged the decorations for the festas of this princely house.

Piero Saranzo, who visited Mantua (1515), in the company of the Venetian Ambassador, has left an adequate picture of a Gonzaga prince in his sumptuous environment. He relates how, after being conducted through endless apartments filled with artistic treasures, they were ushered into the private suite of the duke. Here they found him "reclining on a couch by the hearth of a richly adorned room, with his pet dwarf clad in gold brocade, and three greyhounds lying at his feet, three pages stood by waving large



FIG. 117. CABINET WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. ABOUT 1500
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PAYNE WHITNEY, F.S.Q., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 118. CABINET WITH COLOURED INTARSIA DECORATIONS. MANTUA, ABOUT 1500
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON



FIG. 119. INTERIOR, UPPER BODY OF FIG. 118

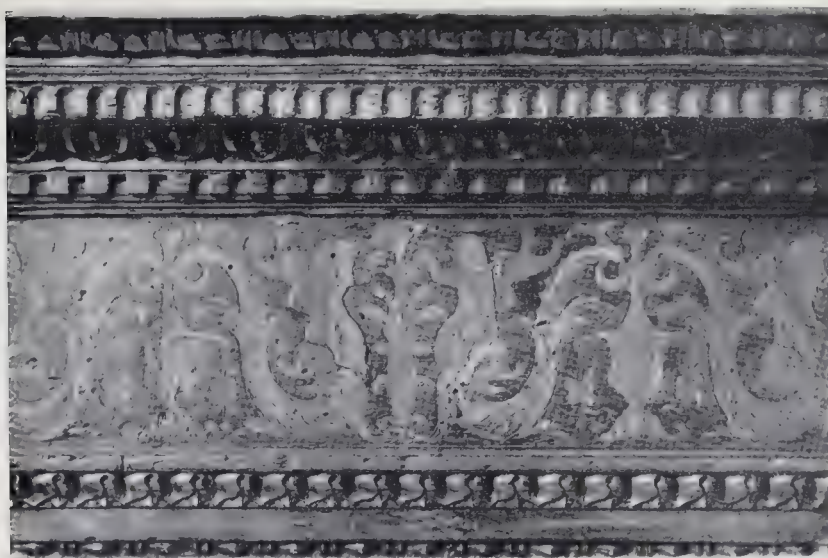


FIG. 120. DETAIL OF FRIEZE OF FIG. 118



FIG. 121. GILDED ARMOIRE. NORTHERN EMILIAN MARCHES, ABOUT 1500-20
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MME. ED. ANDRÉ, PARIS

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fans, lest even a hair should fall upon him; a quantity of falcons and hawks in leash were in the room, and the walls were hung with pictures of his favourite dogs and horses. Francesco received the envoys graciously, and gave orders that they should be shown the other halls of the palace, containing Costa's recently painted frescos, etc. The beauty and extent of the gardens and the magnificent view from the loggia greatly impressed the visitors, as well as the gorgeous dinner service of wrought silver."¹

The fall of Constantinople (1453), which had the effect of bringing Greek scholars with coveted manuscripts into Italy, was to be as fatal to the prosperity of Venice as it was profitable to the advance of classical learning in Italy. In spite of this blow, Venice seemed more magnificent, sensuous and pleasure-loving than ever in the first half of the sixteenth century when she was in the most brilliant period of her Renaissance art. At the close of the Middle Ages the sumptuousness of domestic and social life had been marked, but with the Renaissance, ostentation was supreme, luxury and splendour investing every phase of the patrician's life.

The Venetians were magnificent by nature. Luxury became them like their garments of brocades with heavy folds. It has been said that they had the gift of being gorgeous without being barbaric, magnificent without being pompous, and dignified without being stiff; and these are the qualities that express themselves during the High Renaissance in a magnificent pageant. The prismatic colouring of Venice's natural elements and her communication with the East made it imperative that her artists should illuminate their designs with colour. In Beatrice Sforza's Venetian letters (1493) to Lodovico, she speaks of the tapestried and frescoed walls and the interiors of variegated marbles and gold, with their painted cassoni and chairs.² In another letter to her lord, dated May 27, 1493, on her arrival at Venice, she writes: "All the palaces were richly adorned, and certainly it was a magnificent sight". She was conducted to her father's palace of which she writes:

¹ Cartwright's "Isabella d'Este—a Study of the Renaissance."

² In the illustration of Piero Maria Pennacchi's *Annunciation* (Fig. 97), painted about 1500, an interior with walls panelled in marble of a yellowish tone framed with stripes of yellow red, is pictured. The floor is also of red and black tiles (evidently marble) intersected by bands of white.

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"We found all the palace hung with tapestries, and the beds covered with satin draperies adorned with the ducal arms and those of Your Excellency. And the rooms and hall are hung with Sforzesca colours, so you see that in point of good entertainment, good company, and good living we could desire nothing better." As Italy grew more disturbed with intrigue, foreign invasion, and the Catholic revival, it became the fashion for the rich and idle to resort to Venice, much as the fashionable Europeans did in the eighteenth century. The Venetian fêtes were splendid, while life was comfortable and luxurious in this city "with her pavement of liquid chrysoprase, with her palaces of porphyry and marble, her frescoed façades, her quays and squares aglow with the costumes of the Levant", and her lagoons crowded with the galleys of all nations.

Ferrara enjoyed much of Venice's good fortune while she maintained the splendid life of the Este. Carrying on the tradition of her high standard of chivalric civilization, she was still famed for her artists and poets, among whom were the renowned Bembo, and Lodovico Ariosto who published his "Orlando Furioso" while in the service of Duke Alfonzo. The alliance of the Houses of Borgia and Este, through the marriage of Lucrezia to Alfonzo,¹ Isabella's younger brother, also did much to sustain as an art centre the ancient and aristocratic court of the Este, for Lucrezia, who had been reared in the profligate luxury of the court of her infamous father, Pope Alexander VI, showed great enthusiasm for the arts and letters and incurred not only the envy of Isabella, the most aristocratic and illustrious lady of the Renaissance, but the praise of poets and the admiration of artists as well.

Numerous villas with interiors and gardens of unrivalled beauty had been reared by preceding Este dukes, yet it is said that Alfonzo I eclipsed all previous efforts when he reared the Palace of the Belvedere on an island in the River Po. Though demolished by Pope Clement VIII, the fame of this enchanting pleasure house still lives in the "Orlando Furioso". In Alfonzo's and Lucrezia's day "A flight of marble stairs led from the water's edge to a

¹For the transport of the wedding outfit that Lucrezia Borgia received from her father more than a hundred mule teams were required.



FIG. 122. ARMOIRE WITH PAINTED DECORATIONS. SIENESE, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 123. CARVED WOOD WRITING CABINET. ROMAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FIRENCE

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court turfed with the finest grass, surrounded by cut box hedges, with a superb fountain in the centre. Facing the grassy court stood the villa, an imposing building with porticos and colonnades flanked by lofty towers. Within, a marble atrium, painted by Dossi with cupids and nymphs, opened into salons decorated with frescos or hung with tapestries. On the other side of the house, between the Duke's private rooms and the Chapel, was the 'Giardino Segreto,' a sunk parterre, with the usual low box hedges, where rare flowers and fruits were cultivated and the water of countless *jets d'eau* splashed into marble basins supported by putti and dolphins. Beyond this was a menagerie filled with elephants, ostriches, and other rare animals, and orchards and ilex woods growing down to the riverside."¹

The golden days of Urbino were too soon over. When the ambitions of Leo X found partial satisfaction in establishing his nephew on the ducal throne (1516), the rightful rulers went into exile and with them that polished school for manners and aesthetics so pleasantly pictured by Castiglione in his "Book of the Courtier." Guidobaldo and his gracious duchess Elizabetta had been forced to flee in 1502 before that greatest of Renaissance tyrants, Caesar Borgia, but after his fall they returned from their exile and in 1504 we hear of Castiglione coming to this court, where he remained for six years, during which time the House of Urbino reached the climax of Renaissance culture.²

At Rome culminated the art of the High Renaissance; here, after the decline at Florence and Milan, the new centre of the arts was gradually established. During the pontificate of that great patron of the arts, Julius II (1503-1513), preceding the two Medici Popes—Leo X and Clement VII, with all their artistic inheritance and love of patronage—Rome became the Mecca for the most illustrious artists of the Cinquecento who established her as the last great art centre of the High Renaissance. As Rome became more artistic and intellectual she grew more worldly, frankly pursuing her "policy of

¹Cartwright's "Italian Gardens of the Renaissance," p. 40.

²When Caesar Borgia conquered Urbino he is said to have carried off treasures estimated at 150,000 ducats. The famous library of the palace alone was valued by Vespasiano, the Florentine bookseller, at 30,000 ducats.



FIG. 124. LEATHER-COVERED CABINET. VENETIAN, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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FIG. 125. INTERIOR OF FIG. 124

culture." In the preceding century Pius II, a Piccolomini, had been acknowledged the most eminent man of letters of his age, Paul II being distinguished as a connoisseur in matters pertaining to art, while Sixtus IV brought Perugino, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and Roselli to elevate the Papacy with artistic fame. But it is through the fiery genius of Julius II (1503-1513), the rightful successor of Lorenzo de' Medici, that the Papacy was crowned with the supreme works of the High Renaissance. Rome, as little artistic as she was spiritual, with all her riches, could import and command the artists that she could not breed; Bramante, Raphael, Michelangelo, Peruzzi, and a score equally renowned, being invited to her court from Tuscany, Lombardy, and other provinces.

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FIG. 126. TUSCAN CREDENZA. FORMERLY IN THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION
COURTESY OF SIG. LUIGI ORSELLI, NEW YORK CITY

The Roman Barons of the Fifteenth Century had not the cleverness or ingenuity "to cover their moral nudity with the dazzling purple of the Renaissance", as did the Sforza, Malatesta, and the Bentivoglio. While the Medici and Soderini of Florence, the Barbo and Grimani of Venice, the Piccolomini and Chigi of Siena, besides others too numerous to mention, were building palaces adorned with beautiful furnishings and forming museums, the Roman tyrants pursued their more violent ways of living. However, by the end of the century, with the High Renaissance, when Rome had regained some of her former prosperity, a great change took place in her social life, as the large number of imposing palaces built before and after the sack of Rome attest.

The cardinals were especially ambitious builders. We learn from a contemporary publication of Francesco Albertini¹ how cardinals, high dignitaries,

¹Francesco Albertini, a pupil of Ghirlandaio and a lover of the arts, published the first edition of his "Opusculum de mirabilibus novae et veteris urbis Romae" in 1510. It is dedicated to Pope Julius II. In it he mentions, by the names they were distinguished by in his day, the Palazzi Colonna, Doria, Pamfili, Sforza-Cesarini, Giraud, Cancellaria, and Farnesina, besides others that have long since disappeared.



FIG. 127. CREDENZA. TUSCAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

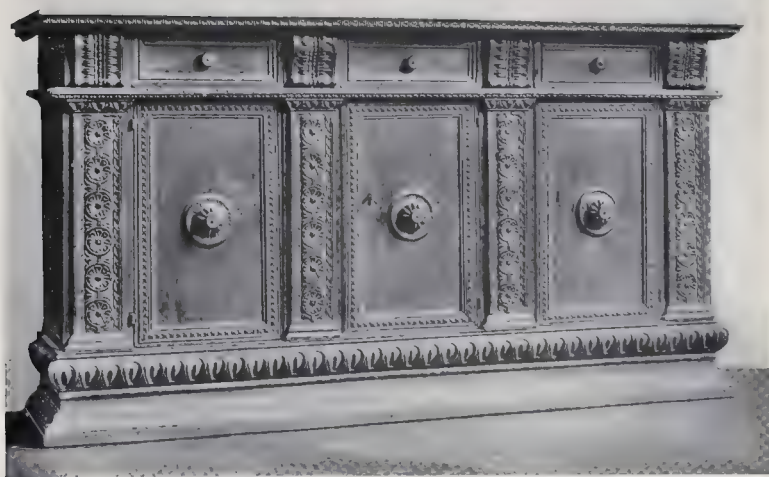


FIG. 128. EMILIAN CREDENZA. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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FIG. 129. CABINET. MIDDLE
OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION
FLORENCE

and "Apostolic bankers" began to build vast palaces adorned with art treasures of the highest order. At first the cardinal's residences were more modest, adjacent to, or a part of the architecture of the church, but as worldly ambitions and extravagance increased they became independent edifices, frankly the palaces of princes. The first of these magnificent structures, the Palazzo Cancellaria, was begun by Cardinal Raffaello Riario in 1495. Others soon followed, such as the Palazzo Giraud-Torlonia, built for Adriano da Corneto (1503-6); the Palazzo Sora, begun by the Cardinal Niccolo Fieschi in 1505; the Palazzo

Farnese, begun by Allesandro Farnese in 1527, and the Villa Medici, built for Ricci da Montepulciano in 1540, all among the notable examples of ecclesiastical palaces of the High Renaissance. Besides these were the sumptuous dwellings of the patricians and those of the wealthy merchants. In these structures—with their magnificent apartments having vaulted and coffered ceilings, with walls embellished with fresco and stucco decoration—popes, cardinals, and princes, and many old aristocratic families who now began to migrate to Rome, vied with each other in the accumulation of works of art and luxuries. Their palaces and villas were storehouses of paintings, tapestries, antique sculpture, and magnificent furniture, every great house having its library and collection of antique art. We have historic accounts of the astonishing expenditure of the rich banker, Agostino Chigi, for whom Peruzzi built the Villa Farnesina and Raphael executed the decorations of the interior. About the same time Raphael began for Giulio de' Medici, a cousin of Leo X, the "Villa Madama", the most princely of all Italian country houses.

At the height of this artistic brilliance and immoral luxury the second great art tragedy of the Renaissance was enacted when, in 1527, Rome was entered by the Imperial army—a horde of barbarous Germans and Spaniards clamouring for plunder while they massacred—and her every sanctity defiled. For eight



FIG. 130. CREDENZA, FLORENTINE, ABOUT 1540
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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days their infernal work was sustained, reducing her population by two thirds, depleting her coffers of the oblation and tribute money of Christendom, and despoiling her treasure-houses of art. Humbled and impoverished, the art of the last great centre of the High Renaissance was disseminated.

Whether we agree with the moralists or not, after the cruel sacking of Rome, the general foreign invasions, the crushing of Florentine liberty by Cosimo, and the religious inquisitions, all following closely upon each other after 1527, there is a decided lowering of artistic as well as moral standards as seen in the too frequent use of vigorous and coarser ornament and a general straining after effects of display. The ethics of the brilliant statesman, historian, and scholar, Machiavelli (1469-1532); the cynical moral views of the clever and witty writer Pietro Aretino (1492-1557), and the bombastic egotism of the famous sculptor Cellini (1500-71), are in striking contrast to the professed standards of the Platonic Academy of Cosimo and Lorenzo and the ideals of the geniuses of their time.

Of the great masters at Rome in the first years of the sixteenth century Michelangelo stands out for his inauguration of a new school that was to mark the beginning of the Baroque. Raphael epitomized the refinement and elegance of High Renaissance decoration, summed up in the "Raffaello Loggia" in the Vatican and was a contemporary of this restless demigod whose lofty conceptions were lost sight of by the later masters of this school in their desire to affect his mannerism in heroic contorted form and agitation, an exaggeration which reached its climax in the works of Bandinelli and Ammanati in the second half of the century. Michelangelo's influence on architecture and decoration was in striking evidence by the middle of the century and the work of the Medici Tombs (1524-37), a bold departure from the designs of Bramanti and Raphael, is decorative sculpture pushed to its limits. In painting, the germ of the Baroque is detected as early as 1508-12 in Michelangelo's heroic conception, the ceiling frescos in the Sistine Chapel. As the sculptors sought to imitate his heroic forms, so the ambition of the painter, later in the century, was to cover vast wall spaces with frescos peopled with bold and active forms.



FIG. 131. CREDENZA. FLORENTINE, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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Architecture, the most stable of the arts, retaining its high standard all through the first half of the sixteenth century, was the last of all to come under the sway of the baroque, though there were instances such as that of Baccio d'Agnolo's Palazzo Bartolini at Florence (1520), the novelty of whose windows and doors of pedimented form so excited the laughter of passers-by



FIG. 132. CREDENZA. SIENESE, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

that they stopped to make a genuflexion in derision.¹ The practice of pedimented openings later played a strong part in the architectural designs of Michelangelo and his baroque successors.

Unfortunately the interiors of the High Renaissance palace have suffered so severely from devastating internal wars and invasions and the alterations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that few have survived intact to our day. From the remaining few, and the fine members of others—such as ceilings, chimney pieces, and doorways, frescos, pavements, and a few less

¹"Andrea Palladio: His Life and Works," Banister Fletcher.

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permanent features—a faint idea may be gained of the quality and unity of the decorations. Coffered, panelled, and beamed ceilings were important features of the interior of the period. They were elaborately carved and beautifully decorated with gold and colours, their cornices being equally splendid. Vaulted ceilings were richly decorated with frescos and fanci-



FIG. 133. CREDENZA. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. JOHN INNESS KANE, NEW YORK CITY

ful stucco designs. Chimney pieces of stone and marble, often with receding hoods, were composed of classic cornices supported on decorative pilasters, shafts, or antique corbels, often a fine quality of delicate ornament enhancing the whole design.

Walls were more richly treated in various ways. In the last years of the fifteenth century and in the first decades of the sixteenth the most exquisite wainscotings of intarsia were designed. Besides the lingering traces, such as those of the Reggia at Mantua and other scattered places, and the vanished work that we learn of from old documents, there are a few fine examples surviving in-

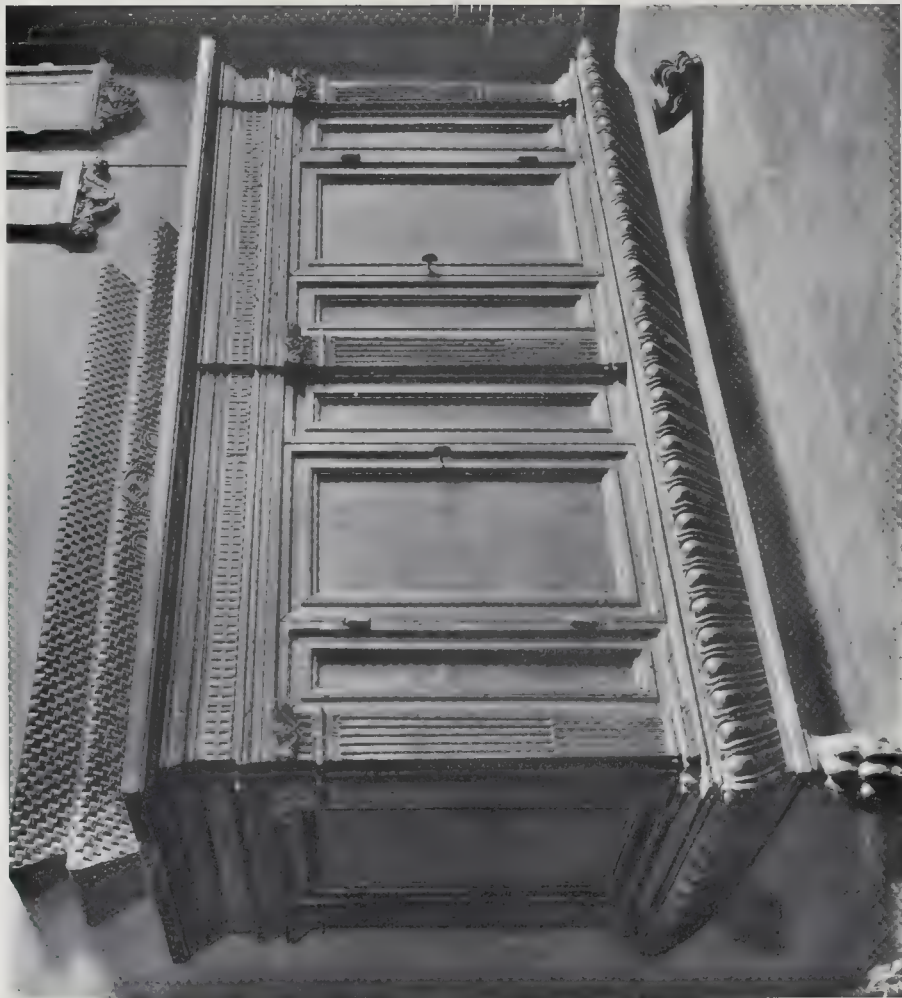


FIG. 134. CREDENZA. SIENESE, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

tact. In a small apartment on the piano nobile in the Corte at Urbino a wainscoting of intarsia of the finest description¹ still remains, which was undoubtedly ordered by Duke Guidobaldo, depicting in the upper panels in perspective, cupboards with doors partly open showing "all sorts of things within in the usual fashion", similar to the beautiful work of Fra Giovanni da Verona done for the Coro di Monte Oliveto, Siena, about 1505. Dennistoun claims that this apartment once "contained arm chairs encircling a table all mosaicked with tarsia and carved by Maestro Giacomo of Florence." Another little apartment ordered by Duke Guidobaldo for the Casa Gubbio, is described by Sig. Luigi Bonfatti as being panelled half way up with intarsia work, with the upper half covered with tapestries. Intarsia, which reached a high degree of excellence in the early years of the sixteenth century, plays an important part in the scheme of the decorations of domestic and ecclesiastical palaces.

We often hear of walls hung with fine stuffs. In the Palazzo Carnara, at Venice, an apartment known as the "Camera d'Oro" was hung with cloth-of-gold and had a magnificent gold cornice the value of which was estimated at 18,000 ducats. The chimney piece supported on gilded caryatides would suggest that these decorations were executed about the middle of the century.

When the walls of important apartments were not panelled with wood or marble, or hung with tapestries and fine stuffs such as velvets and damasks, they were often covered with frescos as in the preceding epoch. Frescoed walls were the crowning glory of the palace and villa but, unfortunately, few of domestic origin have been preserved; most of those surviving adorn ecclesiastical and civic structures. The Borgia apartments in the Vatican, painted by Pinturicchio in the opening years of the High Renaissance, and the Loggia of Raphael in the same palace are among the finest surviving examples of well-preserved fresco wall decoration of this period. Painted wall decorations were sometimes placed above panelled dadoes and arranged in large panels flanked by decorative pilasters. In a little chamber of Isabella d'Este at

¹Appearing in the Ducal accounts is the name of the famous intarsia worker, Bencivegni da Mercatello, who worked in the Sala del Cambio, at Perugia.

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Mantua there was a beautiful intarsia wainscoting, above which were painted canvases inserted in panels framed in the most delicate carved and gilded stucco work.

Special mention should be made of the Venetian interiors which, growing more and more sumptuous since the Middle Ages, were by the middle of the sixteenth century the richest in all Italy. The interiors, in accord with the magnificent architectural display of the exterior, were designed for lavish entertainment rather than family life, while the furniture aimed at decorative effect rather than usefulness. The walls of patrician houses, hung with damask, velvet, tapestries or tooled and painted leather, were crowned with magnificent cornices supporting ceilings panelled, coffered, and beamed, rich in gold and colours. The ceiling with carved and painted beams resting on corbels modelled with



FIG. 135. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. BRESCIA, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

heads "alla Sansovino" were also used in many of the stately apartments. On the walls hung paintings by the great Venetian masters. Architraves were of marbles, doors of the richest intarsia, floors of mosaic, while at the windows were hangings of rare silk. Every detail of the furnishing, including the fire irons in the marble and stone chimney pieces, received the greatest artistic attention. "The desires, needs, and caprices of the rich stimulated the fancy of the artificer to invent new forms for furniture, beds, cupboards, settles, coffers, prie-dieux, stools, arm chairs, high-backed chairs with elaborate carving, seats covered in tapestry or in stamped leather or velvet fastened with nails of gilded bronze."¹ The houses of merchants, as well, were carefully and at times richly furnished. Aretino, the poet, informs us of the house of Andrea Odoni, that not a prince living had handsomer beds, rarer pictures or more regal hangings. The greatest care was bestowed on the furniture and the house contained a rare collection of sculpture, both antique and modern.

¹ Molmenti.



FIG. 136. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE VILLA REALE DI POGGIO A CAIANO, NEAR FLORENCE



FIG. 137. CARVED WOOD DOORS. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 138. WRITING TABLE. FLORENTINE, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

We are greatly indebted to the archives and the literature of the period for illuminating descriptions of interiors. During the summer and autumn of 1490, preceding the marriage of Ludovico Sforza to Beatrice, we learn that a whole army of painters, goldsmiths, embroiderers, and tapestry weavers began their work on the new furnishings of the Castello at Milan for the reception of the bride. To the great master Leonardo da Vinci was entrusted the design of the ceiling decorations in the great ball room "painted in azure and gold to imitate the starry sky". The walls below were hung with painted canvases depicting events in the life of the Sforza. In the letters of the Duchess of Ferrara's maid of honour, written to Isabella Gonzaga on the occasion of the birth of Beatrice's first son (1493), she describes a room adorned with gilded columns (evidently pilasters) hung with white damask curtains richly embroidered with Sforzesque devices, of which she says: "It is calculated that the tapestries and hangings here are worth 70,000 ducats." She writes of the chamber of Beatrice, that her bed was hung with drapery of



FIG. 139. VENETIAN TABLE. EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PAYNE WHITNEY, 1892, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 140. END OF FIG. 139



FIG. 141. TABLE WITH CARVED ENDS. MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN



FIG. 142. FLORENTINE TABLE. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 143. CARVED WOOD TABLE. ROMAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

mulberry and crimson enriched with gold, "which alone cost 8,000 ducats". But her enthusiasm finds no bounds in the expression of her admiration for the "Camera del Puttino," the walls of which were hung with brocades of the Sforza colours and tapestries embroidered with all manner of birds, beasts, and fanciful designs. The golden cradle with its four slender columns and pale blue silk canopy is "truly rich and elegant beyond anything that I have ever seen", writes the ecstatic maid of honour, whose eyes were fairly dazzled by the sight of all these splendours and who, as she told Isabella, "was lost in wonder and admiration at the magnificence of the Milanese Court".¹

Outward life of the Italians in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was polished and ennobled as among no other people in the world.² A countless number of those small and great things which combine to make up what we call comfort, we know to have first appeared in Italy.³ From the novelists we learn of stately beds, rare carpets, and other bedroom furniture of which

¹Cartwright, "Beatrice d'Este. A Study of the Renaissance."

²In the first half of the 16th century appears Giovanni della Casa's "Il Galateo," a manual of politeness. Cleanliness, in the strict sense of the word, is prescribed and its dissertations on good manners, tact, and delicacy are in accord with our highest sense of these refinements of life to-day.

³Burkhardt, "The Renaissance in Italy," p. 376.

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we hear nothing in other countries, while we often read of the abundance and beauty of the linen. This is confirmed by numerous old inventories and documents, one listing the wedding gifts of Donna Bona Sforza (1517) recording: eighteen counterpanes of silk, one of which was wrought "alla moresca"; twenty pairs of sheets all embroidered with different coloured silks, seven pairs made of Dutch linen and fringed with gold, thirty-six hangings of silk tapestry, in addition to forty-eight sets of stamped leather, and eight large pieces of Flemish arras "con seta assai" representing the seven works of mercy that were valued at one thousand gold ducats. Of the plate: "a silver waiter, two large pitchers wrought in relief, three basins, an ewer, and six large cups; twelve large plates, twelve ditto of second size and twenty-four soup plates made 'alla francesi', a massive salt cellar, a box of napkins, spoons, and jugs, four large candlesticks, two large flasks, a silver pail, and a cup of gold worth 200 ducats".¹ Even the more modest houses in many provinces had an atmosphere of individual charm. Apartments with polished floors of scagliola and simple walls were furnished with chests, cupboards, bedsteads of walnut, curtains, carpets, silver spoons and forks.

Boulting gives us, however, another side: "We read of parrot cages and mirrors and ivory combs, of perfumes and tooth powders, of how the knights and ladies of Ferrara arrayed themselves in silk and cloth-of-gold and of the magnificent uniform of the pages, yet these resplendent youths were provided with but one copper basin for their washing, but one brush for their fine clothes, and but one wooden comb for the long flowing locks of all of them."

In summing up the furniture design of the early sixteenth century it may be said that it has the simplicity and ecclesiastical dignity of that of the Early Renaissance, with greater care given to the refinement of its detail. Proportion was perfected; moulds, pilasters, and caps were of more classic purity, and decorations of carving, intarsia, and painting were of exquisite design and execution. Just before the middle of the century the influence of Michelangelo is evident in the tendency toward boldly modelled and sometimes

¹Adolphus Trollope, "A Decade of Italian Women."

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exaggerated scale in moulds, a use of baroque architectural features, a prominence of the human figure displaying a more sculptural quality, a frequent use of a less pleasing grotesque, while the use of caryatides largely supplanted the orders. With the human figure and the grotesque, developed a more vigorous type of ornament in which is displayed a greater complexity of curved forms.

The different sections, however, show strong individual characteristics. Florence, or Tuscany, which is often unjustly accused of coldness, always shows



FIG. 144. END OF AN ANTIQUE STONE TABLE
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

purity of taste and firmness of judgment, manifesting dignity, restraint, and correctness of design in her furniture. Good proportion, and a less frequent use of ornament, including the human figure, caryatides, and grotesques are noticeable. Even in the first period of her Renaissance architecture—just preceding that era when exuberant inventiveness led to such fanciful and beautiful structures as the Certosa di Pavia—Brunelleschi had reared the columnar edifice, the church of San Lorenzo, a masterpiece of Renaissance adaptation in which not a form or detail is at variance with Roman precedent.

Venetian furniture of the first part of the High Renaissance is dignified in form, with a preference for rich surface decorations of gold and colours in low



FIG. 145. TUSCAN TABLE. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF HENRY C. FRICK, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

ITALIAN FURNITURE

relief; though perhaps less serious and classic than that of Florence, it is richer and more graceful. The great change in the Venetian style took place in the third and fourth decades of the sixteenth century when, after the sack of Rome, Sansovino came. He brought the influence of Michelangelo as it developed in furniture design at Florence, which in a modified form ruled Venetian design. Painted and gilded furniture with fanciful designs gave way to natural wood elaborately carved and sparingly touched with gold. The forms were rich, while the decorations, carved in high relief, were composed of antique ornament, grotesque masks, scroll work, and small figures. Yet, during the period of Sansovino's influence, when the Baroque was manifesting itself, Venice preferred a more pleasing and playful grotesque and a more evenly scaled surface ornament. Venetian culture is stamped with a character of rich and powerful state-craft. In her art we see manifested the splendour and dignity of her sensuous life and, as has been said, a self-satisfaction without a trace of the spiritual striving which troubled Florence.

The furniture and decorative arts of Mantua and Ferrara came so completely under the influence of Venice in the first half of the sixteenth century that they may be placed in the category of Venetian art. It is said that the Ducal Houses of Mantua and Ferrara brought their craftsmen from Venice, which no doubt accounts for the domination of Venetian influence, yet we learn from old records that the houses of the wealthiest Venetian patrician could not compare in splendour with the palaces of the Este and the Gonzaga. Decorative pilasters and panels with rhythmic arabesques composed of plant forms, and pleasing grotesques expressed in painting, gilding, and intarsia, dominate design in the first two or three decades of the sixteenth century. It was not until the middle of the century that the influence of Michelangelo and Sansovino was felt and was here assimilated with more elegance and grace. The art of this section, the most social of the Renaissance, found its highest expression in the furnishing of the palace. Like that of the preceding epoch, Lombard furniture of the High Renaissance is so rare that it is difficult to judge of its exact design. Of the less important work done after the fall of the Duchy we may infer that, in spite of more crudeness and the growing



FIG. 146. PADUAN TABLE. MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 147. CARVED WOOD TABLE. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 148. CARVED WOOD TABLE. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN



FIG. 149. EARLY XVI CENTURY TABLE
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 150. TUSCAN CABINET TABLE. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 151. CAST TAKEN FROM THE END OF A POMPEIAN
STONE TABLE
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

vogue for a more vigorous type of decoration, the same tendencies toward a lighter and more fanciful interpretation like that of Mantua, Verona, and Brescia were still evident.

From Verona come many fine cassoni of the first part of the High Renaissance similar to those of Venice and Lombardy. They are of simple rectangular form with exquisite decorations of inserted painted panels and

gilded pastiglia work. In villas in the neighbourhood of Brescia, Verona, and Lake Garda have been found many examples of furniture from the sixteenth century—most of them from the second half. They are distinguished from Venetian pieces by a more sober character of decoration and more temperate architectural forms, the style of Michelangelo and Sansovino seeming to have little influence here.

Furniture from the vicinity of Bologna, though not so sumptuous yet decidedly heavier, has in the High Renaissance period, a character similar to that of Mantua and Ferrara. In the designs of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the influence of Florence and Venice is evident, yet with these combined influences, Bologna always retained an individual style of heavier character that grows especially noticeable as the sixteenth century advances, and those pieces surviving from the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, though often simple and of good proportions, have that ponderosity that



FIG. 152. CARVED WOOD TABLE. FLORENTINE, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

pervades the atmosphere of Bologna. Formigine, the celebrated wood carver of Bologna, to whom all the finest woodwork of the first decades of the sixteenth century have been so freely attributed, developed a style, especially in cassoni, that displays the rhythmic plant forms of the Venetian school, interpreted in a higher relief and larger scale, of Roman character.



FIG. 153. CARVED WOOD TABLE. FLORENTINE, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

In the Marches we find a diffusion of influences. Those of northern Ancona can be claimed as a domain of Tuscan art, while in the upper part of the Emilian section Venetian characteristics are evident. The work of Umbria always shows an eclectic taste. In the fourteenth century the influence of Siena is apparent, while in the fifteenth century that of Venetia and Tuscany is most noticeable, the Tuscan character becoming especially evident later in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

During the first years of the High Renaissance Rome showed the influence of Raphael and workers from Tuscany, but she soon established an



FIG. 154. SIDE TABLE. LOMBARD OR VENETIAN, MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN



FIG. 155. LIGURIAN SIDE TABLE. ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAYANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 156. CARVED WOOD CENTRE TABLE. FLORENTINE, EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG 157. CARVED WOOD TABLE. SIENESE, EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

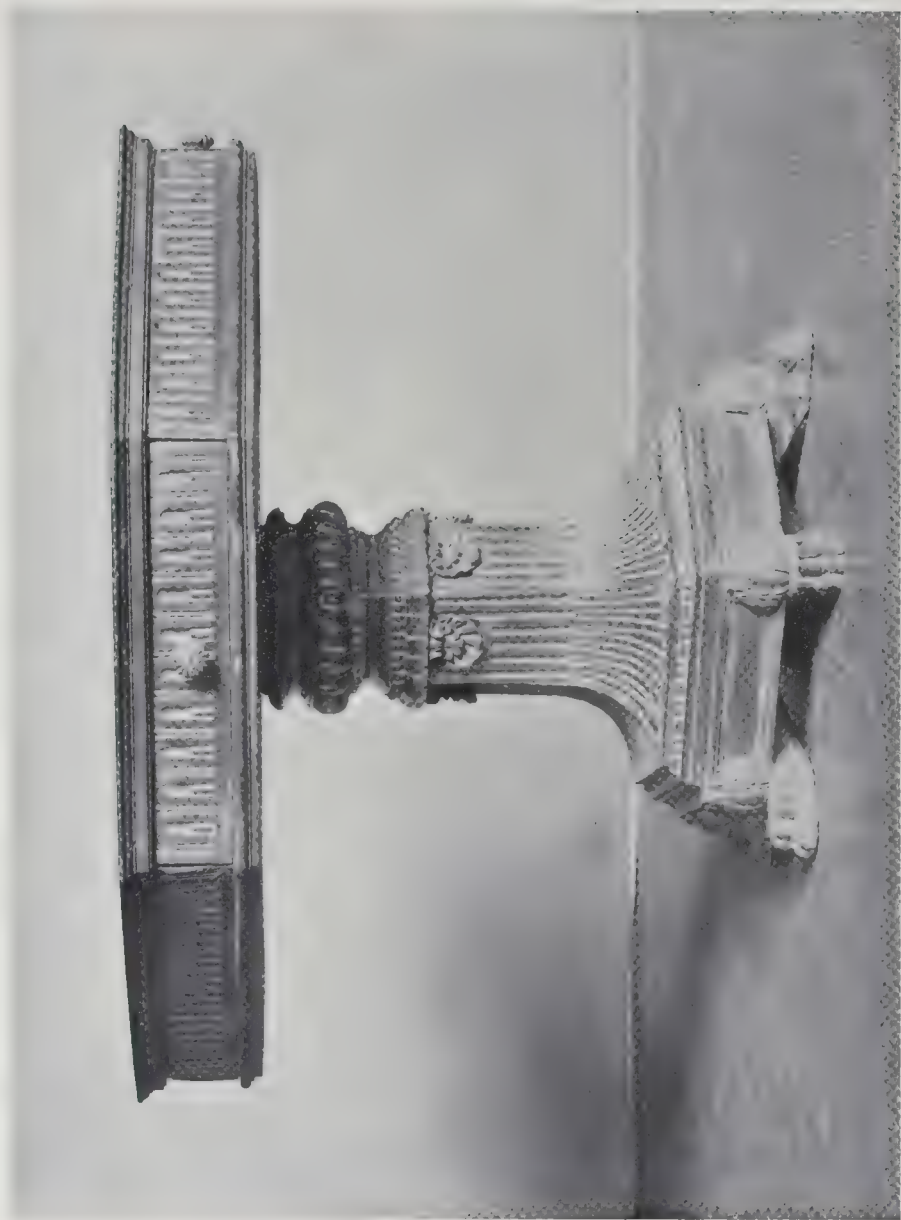


FIG. 158. CARVED WOOD PEDESTAL TABLE. SIENESE, ABOUT 1500
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

expression that was affected by her classic ruins and the antique masterpieces then being brought to light out of her soil by the early archaeologists.¹ Although her craftsmen and designers are said to have been Tuscans, they could not throw off the spell of Rome. Even the saintly Fra Angelico could not paint his holy visions here. Rome is the baroque city. She was ponderous and dogmatic. In the early years of the sixteenth century she was coarser in the enjoyment of her luxury and in the following century she found her affinity in the Bernini. Her furniture is heavier and her cassoni resemble ancient sarcophagi. The human figure, the grotesque, and the caryatides are prominent in the designs of credenza and table; all ornament is more vigorous, and after the invasion these characteristics become more pronounced and debased.

Investigation proves that the luxury-loving courtiers of the Aragon rulers at Naples and Sicily furnished their palaces very richly. We are informed that the princes kept their art treasures in finely constructed chests, yet, in general, Neapolitan furniture of Renaissance design was not produced until after the middle of the century and it is very similar to that of Rome. Excessive ornamentation in bold relief, vigorous moulds and dark-toned wood with a fine patina are its distinguishing characteristics.

In Piedmonte, Savoy, and Liguria the furniture of the Cinquecento shows a close relationship to that of France, especially in remote Piedmonte, Val d'Aosta, and Savoy, where the Gothic traditions were retained as late as the sixteenth century. Though much furniture designed in the Renaissance styles comes from Genoa and the Riviera, yet very rarely is it found dating before the sixteenth century. It is so similar to that of Lyons that it has been classed in many collections as French, yet a recent authority claims the furniture of Liguria to be a model for that of Lyons. The cassone was not the most important form of furnishing here; instead, a cupboard in two bodies, of almost equal proportions, each with two doors, was in general use. Its construction is simple and architectural, while its decoration is usually elaborate. Some of the tables from

¹Enthusiasm for the antique was at its highest pitch. The Niké had been found in a Roman garden, while the discovery of other ancient masterpieces such as the Apollo Belvedere and the Laocöon, now in the Vatican, stimulated intense interest in classic art.

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these sections are also so closely related to those of contemporary French designs that it is quite difficult to distinguish between them.

Early in the sixteenth century the carved wood cassone with a form resembling the Roman sarcophagus supplanted the rectangular form of more architectural design enriched with pastiglia and painted decorations. Yet from the northern provinces chests of the early part of the century retain much of the delicate ornamentation of the late Cinquecento and show in their forms less influence of the ancient sarcophagi than the Tuscan, Roman, and Umbrian examples. Although pilasters are employed and the general design of Figure 105 is quite architectural, the base member and the claw feet suggest the sarcophagus, and when compared with Figures 54 and 55 of Chapter II, the slightly later character of this example, from the vicinity of Mantua, is more readily detected. The Venetian cassone, illustrated in Figure 106, is the last of those of the High Renaissance with pastiglia decorations and is the type just preceding the carved wood chest that Sansovino introduced. The body slants inward toward the base, which rests on shaped brackets painted with sea horses ending in scrolls. The panels of the front as well as the band above them are modelled with a gilded pattern of arabesques composed of leaf forms in the style of the Lombardi. Bands of painted decorations also frame the panels of the front.

One of the earliest sarcophagus forms is illustrated in the succeeding figure. Those dating from the first decade of the sixteenth century follow more closely the ancient models and antique Roman ornament seems preferred to compositions with numerous figures and grotesques in this period, before Michelangel-esque sculpture had established its vogue. Models of this form are invariably raised on lion feet. Figure 108, also following closely the antique model from which it is derived, is one of the finest classic examples of the early sixteenth century. The panel at the top is raised considerably with a mould in the manner of nearly all contemporary chests, while the design of the carved panel of the front is taken directly from the antique and nicely combined with the coat of arms and grotesque. The base mould resting on lion feet is boldly carved with a decoration that is rarely met with in earlier examples, as it did not



FIG. 159. CARVED WOOD CENTRE TABLE. FLORENTINE, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 160. CARVED WOOD STAND. ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 161. CENTRE TABLE. ROMAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 162. CARVED WOOD TABLE. VENETIAN, EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SALVADORI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 163. CARVED WOOD TABLE. ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

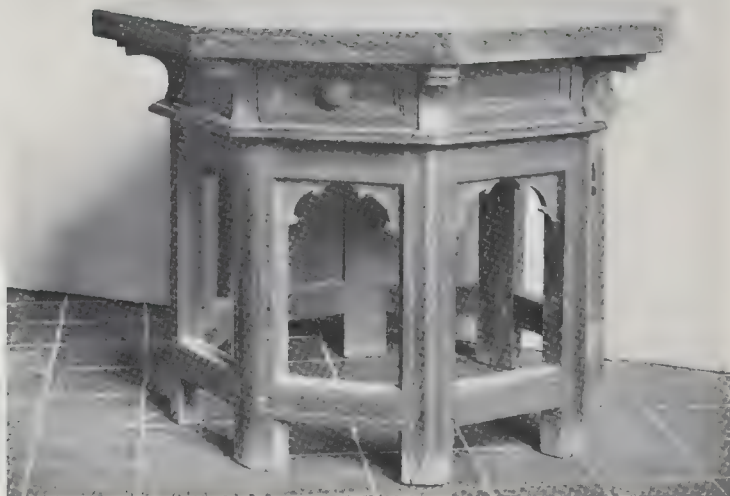


FIG. 164. OCTAGONAL CENTRE TABLE. BOLOGNESE, EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

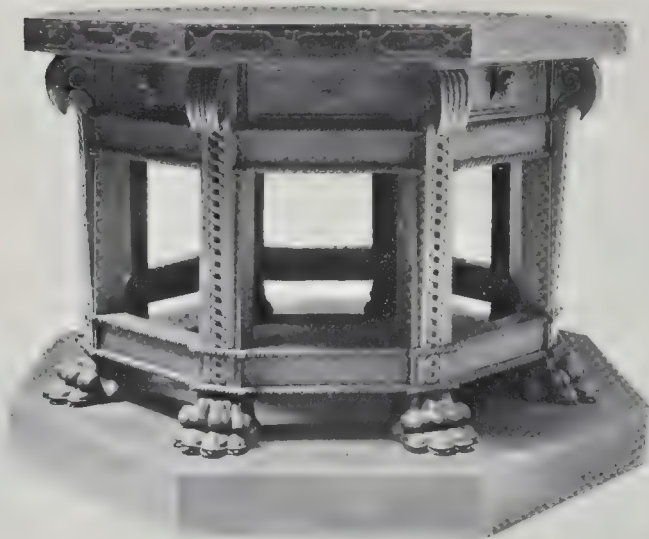


FIG. 165. INLAID CENTRE TABLE. ROMAN, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

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become popular until about 1500, gradually growing more pronounced in those chests designed about the middle of the century.

Two excellent examples of the Roman cassone of the High Renaissance derived from the same source are illustrated in Figures 109 and 110. Nearly all important Roman specimens of this period are of this form. They display

a coat of arms flanked by putti or sibyls, placed in the centre of panels filled with figures modelled in high relief, depicting subjects borrowed from Roman history or mythology, many of these figures as well as whole groups being taken directly from antique statues and bas reliefs then being discovered in Rome. The end panels are filled with similar figures, while at the corners of the front stand warriors and female subjects. Base members, invariably resting on lion feet, are often heavily carved, as in Figure 112, with swags and the human figure. The practice of carving all moulds with leaf and abstract motifs derived from classic source is pronounced in the cassoni of this type dating after 1520.

Figures 111 and 112 are both later developments of the preceding design. Although Figure 111 is without the heavily moulded and carved base, yet the grotesque figures of coarser conception placed at the corners, as well as those flanking the motifs placed on either side, and the central cartouche motif, are prominent in designs of the third, fourth, and fifth decades of the sixteenth century.

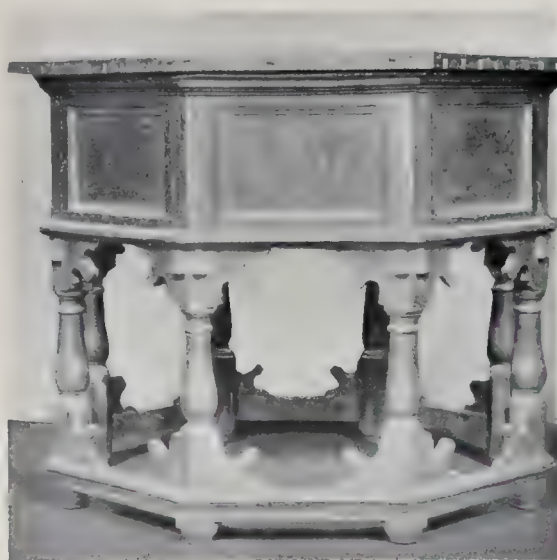


FIG 166. TABLE WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 167. ARM CHAIR. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF JAMES W. ELLSWORTH, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

In the following figure, displaying the arms of the Alberti family of Florence, these features are more pronounced, while the outline of the base member placed between the lion feet, as well as the design of the arms, shows a decided baroque feeling in its disturbed line. A chest of almost identical design, with the arms of the same family, is in the Mme. Edouard André collection at Paris. Cas-

soni being often designed in pairs, this is undoubtedly the companion piece to the foregoing.

A pair of Roman cassoni, one of which is shown in Figure 113, illustrate another important variation of these chests. The front is divided into three rectangular panels, the centre one containing the heraldic motif supported by beautifully modelled figures. Flanking the centre panel are other panels filled with figures in high relief depicting classical subjects, rivalling in modelling and drawing the finer bronzes of the period. Carved figures are placed at the corners besides filling the panels of the ends, while the heavy base is carved in the characteristic style, and the mouldings of the top are left undecorated, in the manner of the earlier chests. It is doubtful whether the ornamental base placed between the lion feet is a design of contemporary date, as its forms suggest later character. Differing but slightly, the companion piece shows, in the two panels placed on either side of the central motif, the death of Niobe's children from the arrows of Apollo and Diana. In addition



FIG. 168. DANTE CHAIR. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PHILIP LEHMAN, F.S.Q., NEW YORK CITY

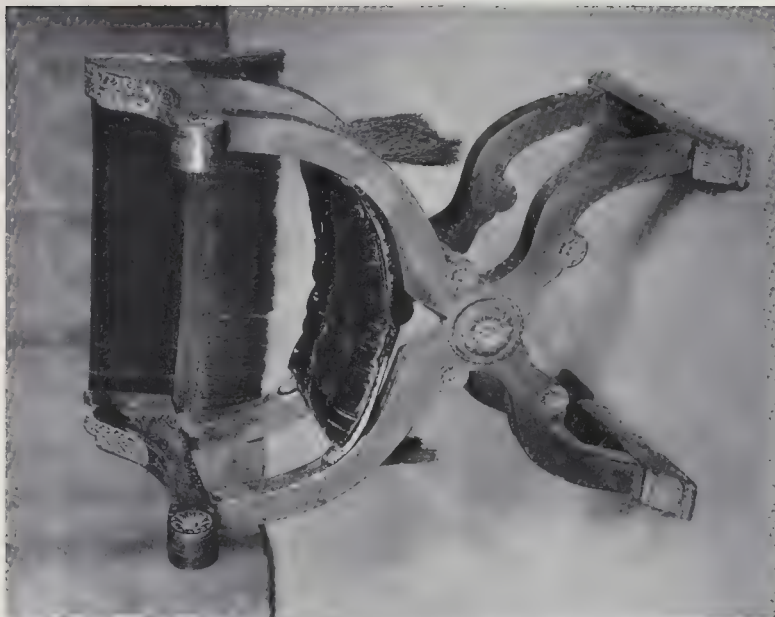


FIG. 169. DANTE CHAIR. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PHILIP LEHMAN, F.S.Q., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 170. SEDIA SAVONAROLA. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF CARL W. HAMILTON, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 171. SEDIA SAVONAROLA. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF CARL W. HAMILTON, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 172. ARM CHAIR. UMBRIAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 173. CHAIR WITH TOOLED LEATHER. TUSCAN, FIRST HALF
OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 174. ARM CHAIR. TUSCAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON



FIG. 175. ARM CHAIR. VENETIAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

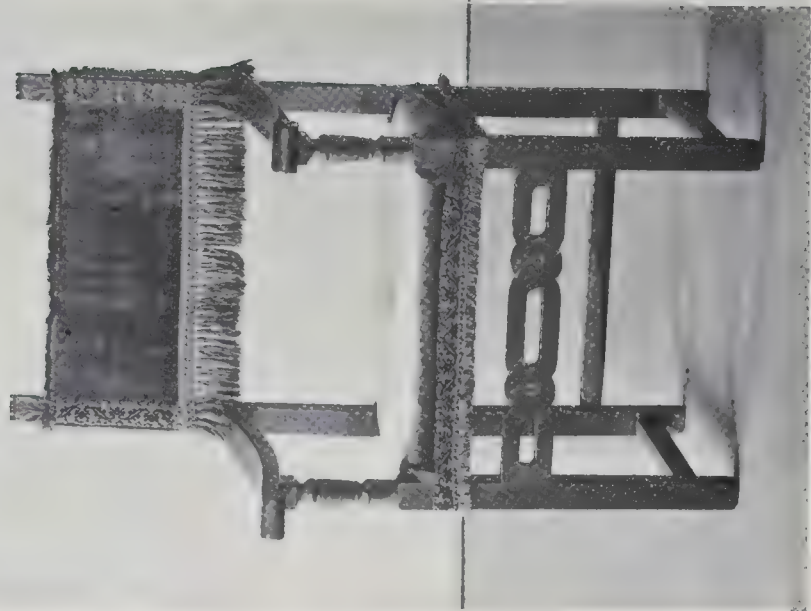


FIG. 176. ARM CHAIR. NORTH ITALIAN, FIRST HALF OF THE
XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF W. & J. SLOANE, NEW YORK CITY

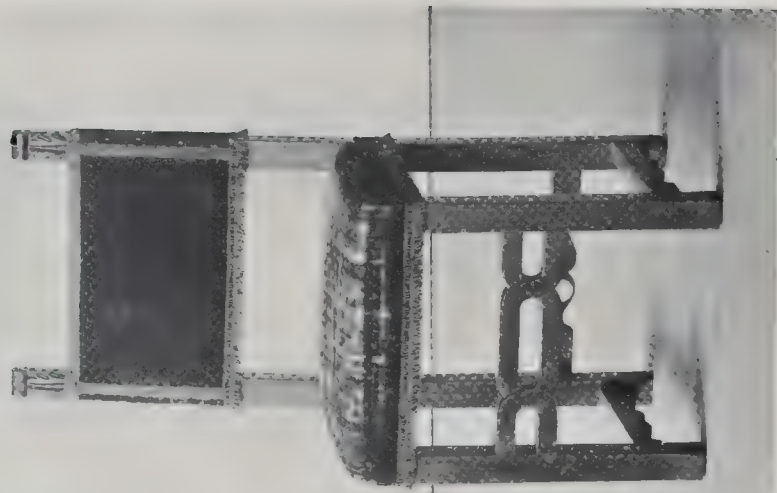


FIG. 177. SIDE CHAIR. NORTH ITALIAN, FIRST HALF OF THE
XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF W. & J. SLOANE, NEW YORK CITY

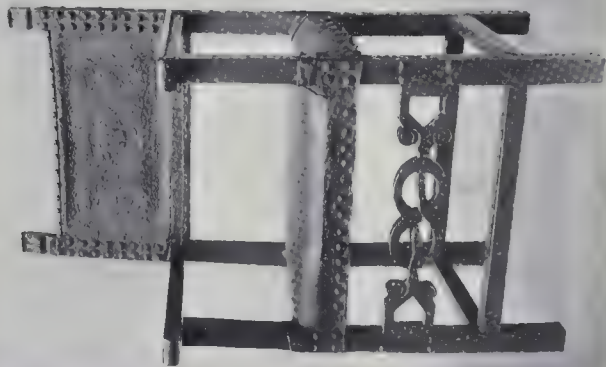


FIG. 178. ARM CHAIR. LOMBARD, ABOUT
THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

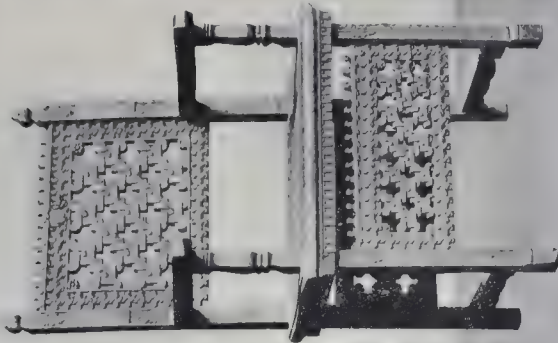


FIG. 179. ARM CHAIR. VENETIAN, FIRST
HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

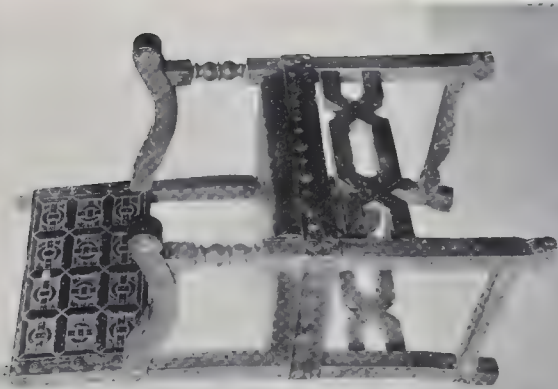


FIG. 180. ARM CHAIR. NORTH ITALIAN
MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

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FIG. 181. LOMBARD CHAIRS. ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF
THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

to the notable sculptural quality of their decorations, these chests are further distinguished by their surfaces of fine bronze-like patina which are often combined with antique gilding of harmonious tone.

Figure 114, a Tuscan or Umbrian example dating about the middle of the century, shows a vigorous gadrooned base resting on lion feet. Its front and sides are spaced with rectangular

panels framed in projecting moulds of more delicate scale. These moulds, rarely seen in fifteenth century designs, did not become general until after the second decade of the sixteenth century. Stiles as well as moulds carved with the guilloche appear in the finest work throughout the first half of the century.

Though the sarcophagus form dominated cassone design of this period, the rectangular form frequently appears in certain sections, especially those of Venetia, Lombardy, and parts of Tuscany. Siena never came fully under the domination of the antique; she was more temperate and austere, while she retained older traditions. The cassone from that city, illustrated in Figure 116, proves a respect for earlier traditions in the use of pastiglia medium and a more romantic type of decoration, yet the convex panel and the full and richly ornamented moulds evince an appreciation of prevailing tendencies in cassone design. In the long, low chest just preceding is shown a Tuscan interpretation of the rectangular form, with well-spaced panels framed with carved projecting moulds and a gadrooned base that is less prominent than that of many of its more ornate contemporaries.

The development of the cabinet in two bodies with the upper half con-

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taining drawers, together with the credenza and armoire, made the cassone a less important article of household furniture. The high cabinets are undoubtedly of north Italian origin, as the earliest existing examples show the tendencies of northern design. They also mark the beginning of more elaborate drawer work in cabinets. Figure 117, one of the earliest of this type, is from the finest period, as its well-proportioned spacing and intarsia designs suggest. The lower body has two doors decorated with an intarsia design composed of vase forms, dolphins, and birds. These are enclosed with bands of inlay of earlier character, while similar patterns decorate the stiles, and the ends have panels inlaid with large geometrical patterns. The front of the upper section is spaced into various compartments, some having doors, others enclosing small drawers. They are inlaid with ribbon scrolls which, like the cornice, bear Latin inscriptions. As is usual in work of this period, especially where intarsia is employed, the moulds are simple and delicate, not projecting, rather receding from the stile to the sunken panel, in the characteristic fifteenth century manner. Comparison with the moulds of Figure 114 will serve as a fine illustration.

One of the most famous cabinets (Figure 118) of this type in existence, said to have once been in the possession of Charles V and, without doubt, made for the Gonzaga, was found near Mantua by Sig. Bardini. It incorporates all the characteristics that represent the climax of High Renaissance design before the influence of Michelangelo had begun to be felt. The upper body of rectangular form with its carved classic cornice and frieze embellished with an intarsia decoration composed of dolphins, vases, and putti, is supported on consoles derived



FIG. 182. STOOL CHAIR. FIRST HALF
OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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from antique designs that have the fine feeling of Verocchio, and Mantegna's interpretation of the same. The fall front, with its surface enriched with coloured intarsia, composed in squares inclosed with an exquisite border of the same medium, reveals the interior with its numerous drawers outlined



FIG. 183. SGABELLO. URBINO, EARLY XVI CENTURY

FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 184. TUSCAN SGABELLO. ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY

FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

with delicate receding moulds. The surface of the two hinged doors on either side shows a decoration of intarsia, with books and other objects in perspective, similar to that shown in the beautiful choir stalls executed by Fra Giovanni da Verona (Figure 90).

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Still another form of the tall cabinet is the following gilded armoire with pastiglia ornamentation in the style of Venetia and Lombardia. The projecting moulds that frame the panels of the doors, as well as those of the base, give to this piece a slightly later appearance than the preceding cabinet, yet its simplicity of form and the evenly scaled rhythmic decorations, confined in simple rectangular panels, are characteristic of the best expression of the High Renaissance, which held out longer against the prolific baroque style here than in the provinces farther south. The Hebraic inscription of the frieze proves

this piece, which perhaps comes from a synagogue, to be of Jewish origin.

The Raphael Loggia in the Vatican, the most perfect decoration of this period, no doubt influenced contemporary painted designs, as is illustrated in the Sienese armoire (Figure 122), whose decoration has been attributed to Sodoma. Its simple form; its tall rectangular panels painted with fanciful and playful grotesques, putti, and other motifs, framed with receding moulds; and its painted pilasters, which were crowned with fanciful Ionic or Corinthian capitals, recall again the simplicity and richness of this period, summed up in one of the finest existing painted specimens of the High Renaissance.

Highly characteristic of the sumptuous Roman furniture of that period is the later writing cabinet in two bodies, illustrated in Figure 123. When compared with Figure 118, of about forty-five years earlier date, its ornamentation of baroque character, which developed so rapidly after the Roman invasion, is easily discerned. The upper part has an elaborately carved fall front, while the two doors of the lower half bear the arms of Pope Paul III (1534-49). Like



FIG. 185. STOOL. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

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much work of this period, the execution is of the highest order and has been attributed to the younger Tasso. This cabinet was included in the Bardini sale that took place in London in 1902.



FIG. 186. THRONE SEAT. FLORENTINE, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE CHURCH OF SAN DOMENICO, FIESOLE

Of more foreign character is the Venetian chest of drawers on a stand with turned supports. The whole is covered with brown leather, decorated with panels and bands which are tooled and gilded with arabesque patternings of floral scrolls, and geometrical interlacings. The fall front of the oblong coffer, which is secured with a hasp and lock, reveals an interior fitted with

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various compartments, drawers, and doors. These are covered with leather of a brilliant Venetian red tone, forming a background for figures and other decorations done in gold, green, and brown. Both Venice and Ferrara excelled in the stamped-leather industry. In the "Atti dei Procuratori di San Marco" several masters of this art are mentioned, in the second half of the fifteenth century, while many throughout the sixteenth are noted in the records. During the following century this industry yielded about one hundred thousand ducats a year to the Republic, when there were over seventy shops engaged in the business.¹ Many cabinets, cassoni, and small coffer, as well as mirror frames, were covered with this ornamental leather.

The credenza, or sideboard—the larder of the palace as well as of the smaller house—shows the same design tendencies as are displayed in the cassone. The general form of the sixteenth century credenza, with few exceptions, is an oblong rectangle, its front spaced with two or three doors, each inter-

¹Campori, "Sulla manifattura degli arazzi in Ferrara."



FIG. 187. CARVED WOOD BENCH. SICILIAN, EARLY XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF SIG. CARLO GIRAUD, FLORENCE



FIG. 188. LATE XV CENTURY BLDROOM
FROM THE GHIRLANDAJO FREScoes IN THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE

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sected by narrow vertical panels or pilasters that have brackets or carved ornaments placed directly over them in a frieze containing drawers. The bases are generally moulded and often carved with a gadrooning and raised on lion feet. Figure 126, a typical Tuscan interpretation of this type, coming from the Palazzo Davanzati collection, dates about 1535. The front, with three doors—with decorations of an escutcheon and fluted rosettes—is separated by narrow vertical panels, all of which, together with the doors, are framed with wider carved moulds, such as appear in most characteristic design between the years 1520-1550. Directly over the doors, drawers—with fluted panels alternating with voluted modillions—compose the frieze. The vigorous carved base rests on lion feet, while an applied carved mould enriches the top. A modification of this composition is seen in the following figure, the general form and arrangement being identical. Fluted pilasters take the place of the vertical panel, while the decorations of the doors and the treatment of the modillions in the frieze vary only in their ornamentation. The more prominent moulds suggest a design of somewhat later date than the preceding credenza.

In Figure 128, the lion feet are omitted, the credenza rests instead on a heavily moulded base having as one of its members a boldly carved mould. The general composition is the same as those of the foregoing, while the pilasters are carved with a rosette decoration, and a slight variation is shown in the design of the modillions, the carved moulds, and the circular panels placed in the centre of the doors.



FIG. 189. SEDIA SAVONAROLA. FIRST
HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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About the same time much smaller cabinets with but one door began to be made, like the example shown in Figure 129. In these smaller designs the same style of composition appears; in fact they may be called a section of the larger credenza. The specimen illustrated is one of the more elaborate ones of this type, much enriched with carving.

The majority of credenza designs dating after 1540, especially those for domestic pieces, show a preference for two doors, which are still separated by panels or pilasters. In Figure 130 the drawer panels and those separating the doors, as well as the moulds of the doors, and the heavy base, are carved with a form of Guilloche pattern that became prominent in the decoration of all furniture about this time. The ends are left severely plain, as in many ornate examples, just before the middle of the century.

Combinations of features typical of two epochs are seen in the credenza illustrated in Figure 131. The general arrangement is again with two sections, a slight variation being obtained by means of double doors. The moulds of the doors and the turned and carved shafts composed of forms adapted from the antique and crowned with Ionic capitals are designed in the style of the late Cinquecento, while the breaking of the entablature and base mould around the shaft and the character of the grotesque placed directly over it, separating the drawers in the frieze, are marked traits of later sixteenth century design. One of the earliest examples in cabinet work of breaking the entablature around the order, is found in the panelling of the Sagrestia di Santa Maria in Organo at Verona (1525). The columns here are also turned and decorated. In the work of Giovanni and Bartolomeo Mati in the Residenza nel Palazzo, Pistoia (1535), the same practice occurs.

Figure 132 is a Sienese example with three doors flanked at either end by fluted and astragalled pilasters as well as narrow, vertical panels that appear to have been rearranged. It would be more in accord with the design then prevailing if they had been placed between the doors, supplying a support to which the centre one might be hinged. The doors are beautifully panelled with moulds carved with a Guilloche and bead decoration much in the manner of the fine woodwork seen in the choir of San Pietro at Perugia, done



FIG. 100. CARVED WOOD BED. VENETIAN, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE LOUVRE, PARIS

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about 1533, and in the walnut doors (dating about 1535-40) shown in Figure 137.

Illustrated in the following credenza is another example with the base and cornice breaking around fluted and astragalled pilasters placed in the centres of the end panels, flanking a pair of doors. The moulds of the doors, simple and delicate in the manner of earlier work, like the small band of inlay placed just within the panel, contrast with the later practice of the broken base and cornice. One of the magnificent credenze surviving from this period is shown in the succeeding illustration (Figure 134) with an unfortunate perspective that does not do justice to its design. The front is divided into two sections by fluted and astragalled pilasters crowned with carved capitals, each division having a panelled door flanked by similar narrower panels. Though undecorated, the moulds are prominent as in most cases when associated with broken entablatures and heavy carved bases. When compared with the credenza of similar design shown in Figure 131 the more correct composition of this specimen is discerned.

Two credenze dating about the middle of the century, shown in Figures 135 and 136, illustrate the stage of excessive ornamentation of furniture reached about this time. The contour of the moulds in Figure 135, especially those of the doors, is not in keeping with the exuberant ornamentation, although, in spite of many simple pieces having been "enriched" by the antiquary, this decoration is undoubtedly of that period. The moulds in Figure 136 are characteristic types often used in conjunction with the ornamentation that enriches them. The fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals support a cornice in which a vigorous mould, carved with leaves and scrolls, takes the place of the more usual drawers. Framing the panels of the doors are uncommonly wide moulds which, like the panels that they inclose, are elaborately carved with a consistently scaled ornament of a high order. Pilasters flank end panels which are also carved. Only in the finest examples of these more elaborate pieces are the end panels found decorated in a manner consistent with the front.

A combination writing table and cabinet is shown in Figure 138. The



FIG. 191. WALNUT AND GOLD BED. NORTH ITALIAN, MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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triglyph frieze that contains the two drawers with bronze handles made its appearance in furniture design during the third and fourth decades of the sixteenth century, at the same time that it became prominent in the architectural designs of



FIG. 192. BRONZE CANDLESTICK. FLORENTINE, EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE



FIG. 193. LOWER PART OF A CARVED WOOD CANDLESTICK. FLORENTINE, EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE

Peruzzi and Sanmichele, from which source it was evidently derived. As early as 1525 a frieze of this nature appears crowning the panelling in the Church of Santa Maria in Organo at Verona. The lighter receding moulds of the table illustrated have the character of those seen in earlier work, and the graceful brackets carved with an imbricated pattern are free from baroque interruptions.

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The long tables of the High Renaissance still have tops resting on ends secured with stretchers, as in the fifteenth century, but as in other work, it undergoes the refining and enriching process of this period. The elaborately designed ends do not generally allow the stretcher to pierce them; instead, a socket is cut on the inside which holds in place the stretcher of more ornamental character, as illustrated in the monumental table of Venetian origin shown in Figure 139. The armourial decoration of the ends together with the cornucopia-like volutes that outline them, stamp this piece with a richness of Venetian design which, if not from one of her patrician palaces, has its origin in Mantua or Ferrara, both provinces having been under the influence of Venetian art at that time. The stretcher of curved form which is placed close to the top is held in sockets cut in ends that are enriched on the inner sides as well. In Figure 141 the ends are of similar form, but the wide ornamented moulds that frame the panels between the consoles place this design several decades later. The stretcher (which is missing) was secured in the manner of the preceding table. In the cabinet work that Michelangelo designed for the Biblioteca Laurenziana at Florence in 1550, consoles of very similar style are prominent.

Late in the fifteenth century edges of table tops began to show a decoration of simple fluting; later, a mould carved in this manner was applied just under the top, giving an appearance of added thickness. Still later, just before the middle of the century, tops of the more elaborate tables had heavily gadrooned moulds similar to those of the bases of contemporary cabinets. Of these, Figures 142 and 143 are excellent examples, both having ends whose designs were inspired by the antique. Figure 142 has



FIG. 194. CARVED
WOOD CANDLESTICK
TUSCAN, EARLY
XVI CENTURY
FROM THE TOLENTINO GALLERY
NEW YORK CITY

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FIG. 195. CARVED WOOD "CANDELABRO." SIENESE,
EARLY XVI CENTURY
ATTRIBUTED TO FRA GIOVANNI DA VERONA. MONTE OLIVETO, SIENA

ends designed in the manner of those of the late fifteenth century, the arrangement of lion feet, scrolls, and acanthus leaves showing the inspiration of the antique, while the heavy mould of the top, each member of which is carved, is characteristic of later work. The form of the stretcher, as well as the crude way in which it is secured, contrasts even more with the treatment of the top. Figure 143 is a more consistent design of a few decades later. The character of the grotesque head and the voluted forms of the ends, as well as the scrolls outlining its base that ends in lion feet, are in perfect accord with the heavily moulded and carved top. This design marks the transition from the more strictly classic models to those tables with pronounced baroque forms, at the same time representing the best of this style dating about 1525-35 before the baroque style had become quite

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aggressive and exaggerated.

Figure 145 illustrates an early sixteenth century table of highly characteristic design inspired by the antique, before baroque features had begun to manifest themselves. The ends terminate in lion feet from which springs the acanthus leaf in a similar manner to that of the earlier design shown in Figure 82. In the later design a coat of arms fills the place which was left free to accommodate the pro-



FIG. 196. CARVED WOOD CANDLESTICKS. EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE PERUZZI DE' MEDICI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

truding pinned stretcher in the earlier example. The edge of the top is carved with a Guilloche design, while just beneath it is placed an applied dentellated mould.¹

Figures 146, 147, and 148 all illustrate structure of this character with

¹A table of identical design is at present in the excellently arranged Museo Civico, at Milan. Though tables may have been designed in pairs during this period, the cleverness of the artisan to-day inclines one to speculate as to the authenticity of both.

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FIG. 197. CARVED WOOD CANDLESTICKS
TUSCAN, EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF ERNESTO G. FABBRI, ESQ.,
NEW YORK CITY

variations shown in the forms and decorations of their end supports as well as in the placing and the shape of their stretchers. Of these, Figure 146 is the most notable because of the appearance of the drawers on which are projecting or bevelled panels, which came into use about the middle of the century. This work, like the stretcher with interrupted curves, is of later character. More raised panel work is seen in the cabinet table shown in Figure 150 which, in spite of its earlier moulds, simple inlay top, and general primitive appearance is a product of the fourth or fifth decade of the century. Simple tables like the little model shown in Figure 149 are more difficult to place. Simplicity of design and primitive structure are met with in many provincial pieces, often having features of several periods combined.

About the middle of the century, a long heavy table, elaborately carved and constructed in the manner of the Ligurian table, was produced at Florence. An authentic one illustrated in

Figure 152 is highly representative. Ends were usually formed of a mass of well-executed carving, often pierced and having the human head or body ending in vigorous scrolls and lion feet; invariably a horizontal stretcher was braced between the bases of the ends. These stretchers formed bases for balusters, supporting arches on which rested the top with elaborately carved moulds.



FIG. 198. CANDLESTICKS, CARVED AND GILDED. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 199. CARVED WOOD FRAME. EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

Of similar design and perhaps a few years earlier date, is the example shown in Figure 153, originally coming from the Palazzo Torregiani. The bold, sweeping forms of the ends, composed of heads terminating in scrolls, recall the designs of Jacques du Cerceau and Hugues Sambin, especially the engraved designs of Du Cerceau, inspired by the models he saw while in Italy about the middle of the century. Many of the French tables used during the period of Henry II and Henry IV were without doubt directly imported from Italy; even those made by Frenchmen in this style are often impossible to distinguish from Italian examples.

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A typical Ligurian model of the mid-century is shown in Figure 155. Little variation is found in the form of these tables, while their decoration is generally composed of the type of foliated scroll and grotesque heads seen in this example. They were as a rule of much shorter proportion than the Florentine specimens of this construction. The Ligurian structure influenced the tables not only of Tuscany for occasionally a design bearing the mark of Lombardy or Venetia is met with, built in this manner, as illustrated in Figure 154. The decoration on the arch-headed panels of the ends is in the Lombard style or possibly that of Verona and its vicinity, but more especially characteristic of the last-named section is the triglyph frieze spaced with circular ornaments, a feature employed in cabinet work as well as architectural design after the development of the style of Sanmichele and Palladio.

Pedestal tables, and those supported on brackets radiating from a central shaft, besides showing a greater variety of form, display more elaborate ornamentation. Those of the first two decades of the sixteenth century, though much enriched, have a dignity and restraint that are nicely exemplified in the Florentine and Sienese specimens, Figures 156 and 157. Figure 156 has a square pedestal, the rectangular panels of which are framed with moulds carved with the Guilloche and bead, while the base is heavily moulded and raised on lion feet. The radiating brackets that support the top are free from baroque interruptions, while the whole design is representative of the finest period of the Renaissance. Though of slightly later date, the following table shows a nice sense of antique adaptation and is within the confines of the same period. Of equal artistic reserve is the pedestal table with an octagonal top whose sides and drawers, as well as the eight-sided shaft and base, are completely carved with a decoration of fluting, marking the richness and simplicity of the best Sienese work. Even during the most exaggerated phase of the Late Renaissance and Baroque styles, these expressions at Siena were tempered by that pre-Renaissance austerity that pervades the atmosphere of Siena up to the present day. The example illustrated in Figure 159, also with an octagonal top containing drawers with a fluted decoration separated by carved animal heads, is supported on three voluted bracket legs ending in lion feet. It evinces the Florentine sense of

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fine proportion and classicism, and at the same time proves that for tables of this description, like the oblong models, the thick moulded and carved top was preferred in the fourth and fifth decades of the sixteenth century.

It was with the sixteenth century that the table constructed in the manner of our usual modern table began its development. The first of these were generally of rectangular or octagonal form. Occasionally they were round, but these were more often of the pedestal type. They were supported on turned or square legs that were invariably braced with stretchers placed between them at the base. It is extremely doubtful if any primitive examples were constructed in this manner,¹ however, it was not until the high period of the Renaissance that any of decorative character as important as that shown in Figures 162 and 163 were constructed in this way.

The hexagonal and octagonal, as well as the round form previously designed with radiating bracket supports or pedestals, were now constructed in the manner of the preceding tables. This is illustrated in the Bolognese model, of about 1500, having brackets separating the panels just beneath the top, and bands of inlay of much earlier character than the construction of the table. Figure 166 is another of the earlier examples of this type with turned supports and fine intarsia decoration, coming probably from the vicinity of Urbino.

Great strides were made in the development of chairs during the sixteenth century. In the first decades the arm chairs of X form of both structures were commonly used, the upholstered type known as the Dante chair growing in favour for domestic interiors of importance as the century advanced. Both types show a tendency toward more carving, while the upholstered models were covered with fine stuffs enriched with fringes and other trimmings. Two chairs of this character, illustrated in Figures 168 and 169, show a richer treatment than those seen in the preceding chapter.

It is the X form, known as the Savonarola chair, that received the attention of the carver, because the greater expanse of the surface of its back allowed him wider scope. The backs often display a coat of arms arranged with arabesques

¹The author has not encountered, in reality, or in any pictorial or literary document, tables constructed in this manner previous to this period.

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and other motifs, in addition to bands of carved decorations filling the surface of front supports, in the manner of those shown in Figures 170 and 171, both models dating from the third or fourth decades of the sixteenth century. The later chairs of this period

show carving of more vigorous, naturalistic, and sometimes grotesque, character, while all the more elaborate models were supplied with loose seat cushions covered with fine materials.

With the sixteenth century began the development of the high-back arm chair of rectangular structure, with upholstered back and seat, that may be called the forerunner of the modern chair. These chairs were found arranged against the wall with the cassone and credenza in all formal rooms of the sixteenth century. Their decorative quality is obtained through their fine proportions, beautiful upholstery, and sparing but effective use of carving. In the first part of the century they were of higher forms, with the effect of a deeply upholstered seat augmented by fringes. These, with supports both turned and square, invariably rest on runners, ending in front in a carved decoration of the leaf or animal foot. These features are nicely shown in Figures 172, 173, and 174, all of which



FIG. 200. CARVED WOOD FRAME. VENETIAN, EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

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FIG. 201. CARVED AND GILDED FRAME. EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BAGATTI VALSECCHI COLLECTION, MILAN

are covered with embossed and gilded leather, while the top of the upright structure of the back is crowned with carved and gilded finials.

Figure 175 illustrates one of a set of Venetian chairs of this character, of a little later date, as its structure, omitting the base runners, would indicate. Carved stretchers placed just below the seat in front were generally used when the base

runners were omitted, and the seat was less deeply upholstered. The succeeding illustrations show variations of this model from different sections, dating about the middle of the century. Of these Figures 176, covered with purple velvet, and 180, with embossed leather, illustrate the use of the curved arm.

A Ligurian model of unusual character is shown in Figure 179. The square supports of the seat have, placed between them at the front and back, a stretcher that is carved and pierced with an interlacing pattern showing the influence of Moorish or Eastern design. The back is formed of a similar panel placed between two upright supports ending with carved finials. The flat arms are supported on forms that appeared about 1550 and were generally used in the high-back arm chair of this type throughout the century.

Stool-chairs as well as stools and benches were still numerous, but of these the stool-chairs or *sgabelli* are of greater importance. That in Figure 183 re-

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semples very closely the form of those shown in the foregoing chapters but, as in the embellishment of all furniture of its period, a preference for carving over intarsia is shown. Figure 184 is of a slightly later date, and is characteristic of the simpler types that were numerous.



FIG. 202. CARVED WOOD FRAME. EARLY XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

The fifteenth century bed, raised on a dais or enclosed with panelling to the base, is still met with in the first years of the century but gives way later to the bed of modern construction, as shown in the Venetian example illustrated in Figure 190. The moulded cornice with a carved frieze of scrolls and leaves is supported on four fluted columns whose lower part, turned with vase

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forms, terminates in a leaf and lion foot, while the whole is crowned with a Corinthian capital, around which breaks the entablature of the frieze. Though of doubtful authenticity, the design is highly characteristic of the magnificent and sumptuous Venetian beds, showing baroque features combined with an earlier



FIG. 203. FRAMES WITH PAINTED DECORATIONS. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

type of more delicate ornament, in vogue before Sansovino's arrival. Head boards, when used, were elaborately carved but not overscaled, while the foot boards are invariably omitted from beds of this style. Counterpanes and hangings were in accord with the sumptuousness of these beds. From the Colonna archives we learn that the beautiful and lofty-minded Vittoria presented as a

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wedding gift in 1509 a bed spoken of as being in the French fashion, "with the curtains and all the hangings of crimson satin lined with blue taffetas; with three mattresses and a counterpane of crimson satin of similar workmanship; and pillows of crimson satin garnished with fringes and tassels of gold." This bed was undoubtedly similar to the one shown in Figure 190, and the foregoing description furnishes an excellent indication of the rich trappings then in fashion and prevailing throughout the sixteenth century. A document dated 1541 records sheets with insertions of the finest lace and counterpanes of damask with gold fringes.

What appears to be a transition from the bed raised on a dais to the one of more modern construction, is pictured in a wall decoration of Sodoma's in the master's bedroom in Agostino Chigi's villa at Rome. The canopy, composed of classic cornice and carved frieze, is supported on four fluted columns with modified Corinthian capitals. From the frieze hangs an embroidered valance with fringe and ample curtains. The heavy carved base is enclosed to the floor and does not rest on a dais.

Illustrated in Figure 191 is a walnut bed of the mid-sixteenth century with four high carved posts ending in vase forms. The rails as well as the low head and foot boards are carved with a scroll and leaf decoration. The form of the head and foot boards is outlined with baroque scroll, which, together with all the carved decorations, is heightened with gold on a walnut ground.



FIG. 204. CARVED WOOD PANEL FROM A COFFER. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 205. BED. WALNUT, GOLD AND COLOUR. TUSCAN, LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

CHAPTER IV

THE LATE RENAISSANCE

THE SECOND HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY



THE supremacy of Spanish power in Italy, decided by the victory of the Battle of Pavia (1525) resulting in the Treaty of Cambrai (1529) and that of Câteau-Cambrésis (1559), turned the art and social life of the Italians away from the intellectual freedom and adventure of the Renaissance into the narrower channel of a stilted and haughty Spanish society, despising industry and commerce and the ease and freedom of Italian social intercourse. The last vestige of Renaissance life and culture was annihilated by the atmosphere which the ascendancy of the Hapsburgs diffused over Italy, completely deadening its spiritual element and excluding the gay, variegated, and irresponsible immoralities of the Renaissance.

Milan, under Spanish governors since 1535; Sicily and Naples with Spanish viceroys, whose chief business it was to raise money by oppressive taxation; Florence under the rule of the severe and prudent Cosimo (1537-74), bowing to Spain and the Papacy for his security: the little coterie of duchies formed by Ferrara, Urbino, Modena, Parma, and Mantua, holding out through the sixteenth century, while Genoa and Lucca were allowed to remain republics, all came under the tyrannical influence of Spain.

Spanish domination had a telling effect on society and art. The courts became swamped with petty nobles bearing recent titles of Spanish bestowal, jostling old aristocratic families, spending their all on their imposing houses and pretentious furnishings emblazoned with their arms, and in the maintenance of servants and gilded coaches which they thought suitable to their new positions. Possession of titles or landed estates was a necessary passport to society, so the rich borghesi abandoned commerce, built vast palaces and villas, bought titles and flaunted their pretentiousness. There was

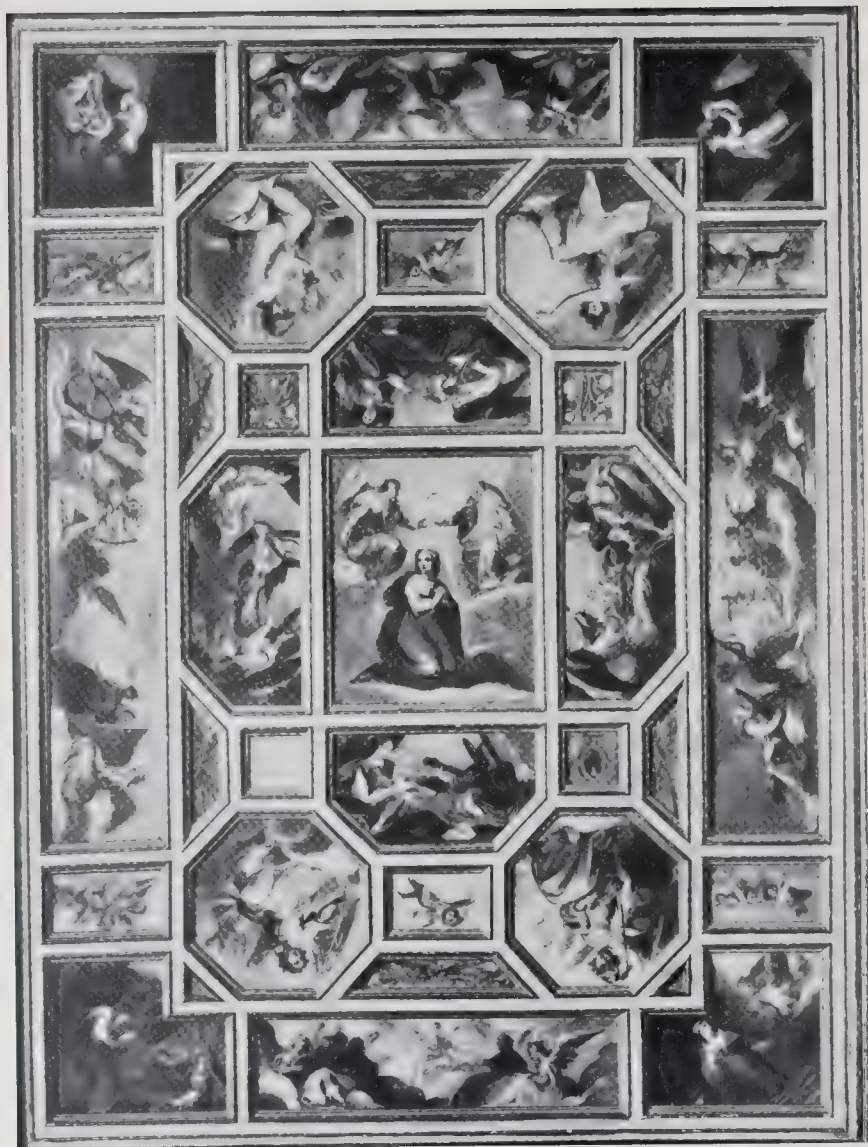


FIG. 206. CEILING OF BED SHOWN IN FIG. 205



FIG. 207. CUSHIONS OF THE XVI AND XVII CENTURIES
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

no longer the old intimacy between patron, artist, and humanist, while wit and talent were not held in the same high esteem. Since commerce was abandoned the only occupation for the upper classes was the army or the church; so militarism was exalted while idleness, folly, and extravagance lost Italy her place as the financial centre of Europe. The result of an impoverished society, demanding a pretentious display, was naturally an inferior and more ornate expression of art. Yet to say that all artistic expression of the late sixteenth century fell to such depths would be an unfair verdict, as it was not until the succeeding century that the Baroque style held undivided sway and even during the seventeenth century there is much fine design that must be acknowledged.

The year 1540 has been set by an eminent historian as the limit of the "Golden Age". After that date—running parallel with a rapidly declining taste encouraged by the followers of Michelangelo, with their limited vision of that great master's work—was the scientific and scholarly work of Palladio, the last great architect of the Renaissance to carry on the tradition of Peruzzi and Sanmichele. Michelangelo by his false use of architectural features and exaggerated scale had, by the middle of the century, led architecture into the ways of the Baroque. His great fame as sculptor and painter sanctioned his followers' tendency to exaggerate all his weaker architectural features in their later work. While the work of Palladio exhibits Baroque characteristics, it has dignity and grandeur in spite of the poor materials that fell to his lot, dictated by the limited purse of his pretentious clients.

Perhaps the Reformation in the north found a contemporary tendency in the Catholic Revival with its Inquisition, working with the suppressing Spanish etiquette to pull together the morals of society while the theoretical Palladio strove to give a better moral tone to the architecture of the period. These influences were as dogmatic as they were unsuccessful. The Italian intellect and taste could best express themselves in the environment of the liberal Medici and in the equally autocratic court of Lodovico, where the individuality of genius was given the greatest freedom and patronage. The charm of all Italian expression lies in its spontaneity, vitality, and inex-



FIG. 208. WALNUT BED. PERUGIAN, ABOUT 1600
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 209. CEILING OF BED SHOWN IN FIG. 208

ITALIAN FURNITURE

haustible aesthetic inventiveness, impressed with striking individuality. The unpleasant, coarse, and barbaric grotesque may be associated with the relentless cruelty of the Inquisition and a less cultivated taste that is exhibited in



FIG. 210. CARVED AND GILDED BED. NORTH ITALIAN, LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF SIG. LUIGI ORSELLI, NEW YORK CITY

some contemporary Spanish work, while the sweeping, vigorous, and showy baroque forms -emblazoned with aggressive arms and heraldic devices, picturing the pretentious display of a vain, impoverished, and striving grandi - embody the true Italian spirit of the late sixteenth century and exhibit many fine qualities of design.

Venice, free from the influence of Spain and the dominion of the Papacy,

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maintained the brilliancy of the Renaissance. In spite of the loss of her possessions to the Turks, she had regained most of her mainland territory taken by the League of Cambrai (1508) and when Sansovino was called there from Rome by Doge Andrea Gritti (1523) he found her at the height of her material pomp. While Sansovino took on the spirit of the pageant of Venice he inaugurated a new style that was to herald the Venetian Baroque. In his work, the Palazzo Carnora della Ca' Grande (begun in 1523)

and which Vasari says "passes all in majesty, grandeur, convenience and perhaps is the most splendid residence in Italy" -and are shown symptoms of the Baroque in the shell-form windows of the crowning frieze. Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto, like Sansovino, sustained throughout the greater part of the century the grand manner of the High Renaissance and reflected the prevailing and encroaching Baroque style only in subordinate parts.

Perhaps no city at any time was so proud and magnificent in her festivals, her pageants, and her social life as was Venice at this period. Veronese adequately sums up this spirit of the age: banqueting scenes, ladies in shot silks and satins; canopies of brocade, plate, fruit, sceptre and crown, in a confusion of proud materialistic frigidity are staged with settings of blue skies, marble balustrades, and noble architecture. Sensuous magnificence is her ideal, yet it is wholly without the grossness and repellent quality sometimes displayed in the works of those of Italy's masters who aimed at colossal grandeur, such as Bandinelli and Ammanati, who have filled the public squares and gardens of Italian cities with Neptunes, Satyrs, and figures of Hercules which, as an eminent art critic has said, have nothing Greek about them but their names, their nakedness and their association with myths.

Though Lombardy lay prostrate under Spanish tyranny, Mantua enjoyed a long and prosperous rule under Guglielmo (1550-87). He added considerably to the artistic accumulation of the Gonzaga while he led a luxurious life, entertaining potentates and the illustrious men of his age, in the treasure-filled Reggia, Palazzo del Tè, and the various Gonzaga villas. His successor, Duke Vincenzo I (1589-1612), maintained this lavish expenditure to such a degree as to deplete the Gonzaga fortune beyond repair. He, at the close of

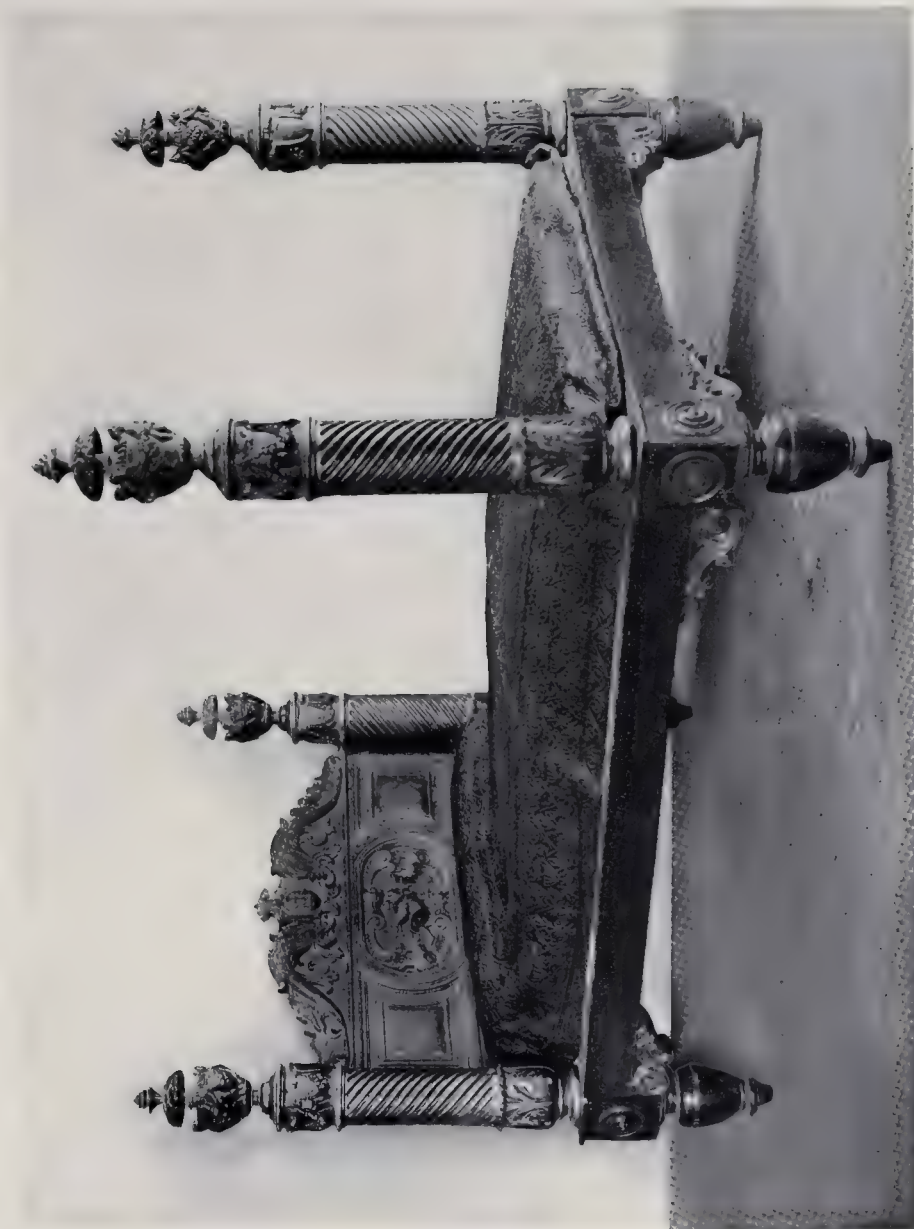


FIG. 211. WALNUT AND GOLD BED. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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the century reared the celebrated Palazzo della Favorita, one of the largest and most ornate of the Gonzaga country houses, called the Versailles of Mantua. Only a single wing of the ruin is now standing and this has been despoiled of its decorations and furnishings which we learn were very important. Of these only a few marbles, now preserved in the Museo Civico at Milan, can be accounted for.



FIG. 212. CARVED WOOD BED. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

It is difficult to grasp the vastness of the Reggia, the principal royal residence of the Gonzaga, with its succession of apartments, halls, and cabinets, in former days rich in carved and painted ceilings; walls frescoed and hung with tapestries, wainscotings of intarsia and decorations of stucco, forming backgrounds for the finest Italian furniture of several centuries, of which, unfortunately, but very little is known to exist. A recent writer in his excellent descriptive travels says: "I commenced my inspection of the palace city of the Gonzaga—even in its ruined state one of the wonders of the world;

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and although I kept steadily at the delightful task, nearly a week had elapsed before the completion of the primary examination; without any doubling on my tracks;—which may suffice to give some idea of its size.”¹

Since we know that the Spaniards and the Lansquenets sacked the Reggia in 1630 and destroyed what they could not carry off, and that depleted dukes in the seventeenth century sold their treasures to the kings of Europe, we can

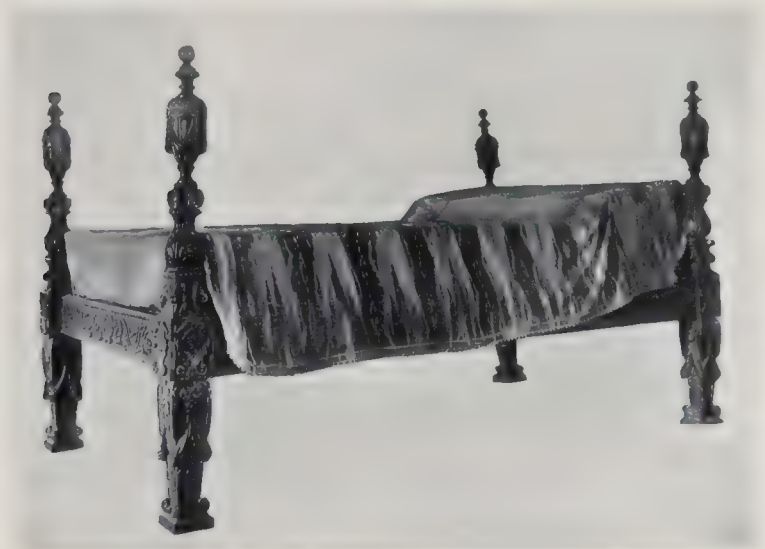


FIG. 213. CARVED WOOD BED. NORTH ITALIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

scarcely believe that when Duke Carlo IV fled in 1708 there still remained such an accumulation that he was able to distribute among the various Mantuan churches and his friends, over 900 pictures, besides many marbles and other objets d'art. It has been said because of the vastness of the Reggia “the Paradiso” of Isabella escaped the vandals of 1630 only to be defiled by the barbarous Austrians in the eighteenth century.

We hear from Lassels, who in Italy, between the years 1630-40, writes of

¹Egerton Williams: “Plain Towns of Italy.”

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the Reggia: "The Duke's palace was heretofore one of the richest in Italy. I was told it had seven changes of hangings for every room in the house; besides a world of rare pictures, statues, plate, ornaments, cabinets, an organ



FIG. 214. CARVED WOOD CRADLE. ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

of alabaster; six tables, each one three feet long, the first all emeralds, the second of Turkey stones, the third of hyacinths, the fourth of saphyrs, the fifth of amber, the sixth of jasper stone. But the Imperialists swept all away" (1630).

Three years after the Sack of Rome, Clement VII crowned Charles V Emperor of Rome and from that time the Papacy showed renewed vigour and energy, increasing its power as political and social Italy weakened. By the end of the century Rome could no longer be called "Babylon, the harlot of nations." The Counter-Reformation had become effective, permeating every class of society. Decorous, seemingly serious, and positively discreet, she screened her greed, cruelty, and hypocrisy with a fine fabric of dogmatic and

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pompous display, in which cardinals, rich Papal families, and ambassadors rivalled each other in the splendour of their palaces and the number and gorgeousness of their lackeys and equipages. Rome, in consequence, became second only to Venice in the number and extravagance of her entertainments and fêtes. It was not, however, until the last two or three decades of the century that she had recuperated sufficiently from the crushing invasion to begin the erection of those most vast and sumptuous of all European residences for the social establishments of her successive Papal families. Among these structures the Palazzo Giustiniani (1580) designed by Fontana, the Palazzo Ruspoli (1586) by Ammanati, the Palazzo Borghese (1590) by Lunghi, and the Palazzo Sciarra Colonna (about 1600) are among the most notable.



FIG. 215. CARVED WOOD CRADLE. FLORENTINE, MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THOMAS F. RYAN, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

Broadly speaking, Genoa begins her Renaissance styles during this period when the alliance between this city and Spain brought great wealth that encouraged an increasing passion for luxury and extravagance. Her merchant

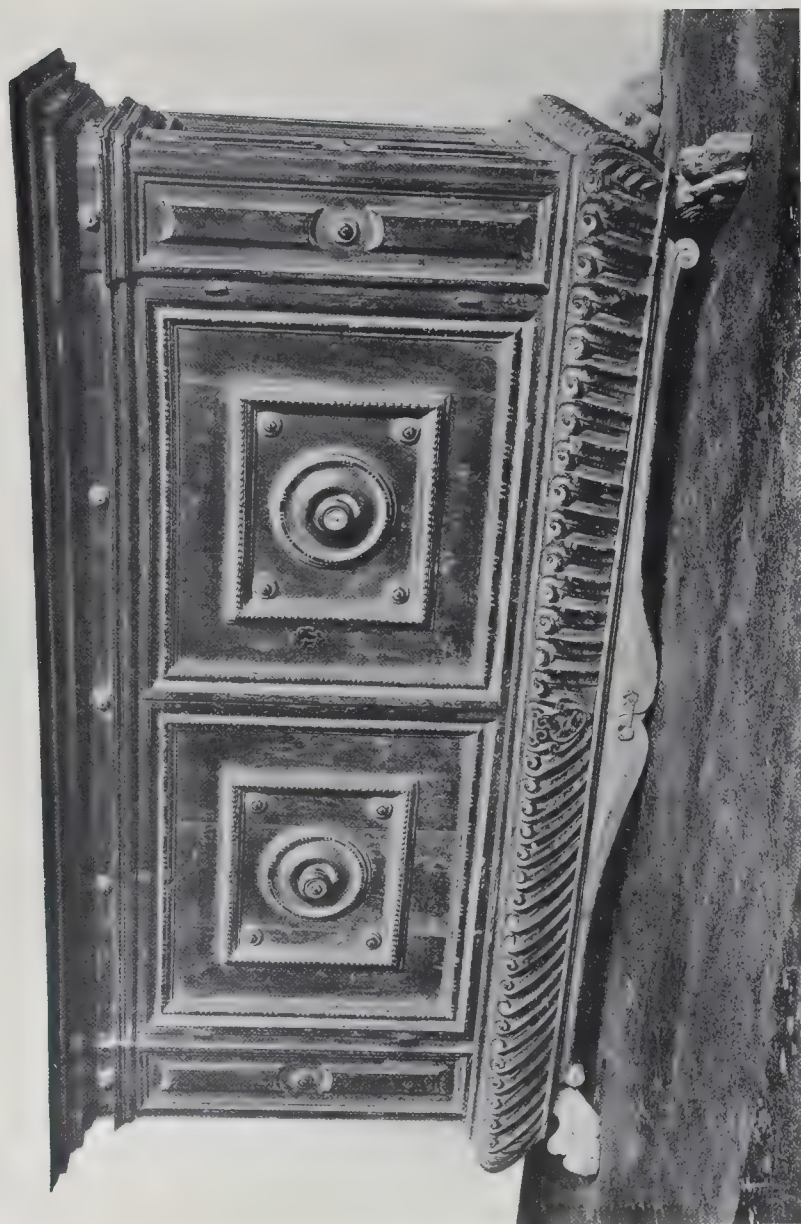


FIG. 216. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 217. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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princes, who controlled the finances of the Mediterranean, built many quasi-Baroque palaces in the late sixteenth century so perfectly adapted to the topography of the city that they won for her that justifiable title of "La Superba." It was Galeazzo Alessi of Perugia who transformed the architecture of Genoa. After his service to the Cardinal of Rimini he was called to Genoa by the Re-



FIG. 218. CREDENZA. LIGURIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

public where, according to Vasari, he made the new street "with the numerous modern palaces designed by him, so many declare it to be the most magnificent street in Italy, and the richest in palaces."¹

John Evelyn on his visit there in 1644 saw these palaces in their pristine splendour. After mentioning the rich furnishings of the Palace of the Negros (Negroni),² he writes: "there are numerous other palaces of particular curiosities,

¹Among the palaces of this period attributed to Alessi are the Palazzi Brignole-Sale, Grimaldi, and Lercari.

²The Palazzo Negroni is one of the smaller palaces. The identity of the architect is uncertain, but the plan and design resemble the work of Alessi. Like most Genoese palaces of this period, its court, with arcade and stately stairs, is very fine.

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for the marchands being very rich have, like our neighbours the Hollanders, little or no extent of ground to employ their estates in; as those in pictures and hangings, so these lay it out on marble houses and rich furniture. One of the greatest here for circuit is that of Prince d'Orias,¹ which reaches from the sea to the summit of the mountains. The house is most magnificently built without,



FIG. 219. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. FLORENTINE, MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

nor less gloriously furnish'd within, having whose tables and bedsteads of massy silver, many of them sett with achates, onyxes, cornelians, lazulis, pearls, turquizes, and other precious stones. The pictures and statues are innumerable." There are several accounts of silver furniture from the old travellers, especially those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This sumptuous idea had its inception in Italy toward the close of the sixteenth century and found expression in the houses of the most magnificent and pretentious lords in the last years

¹This is the well known palace reared for Andrea Doria. It was begun in 1522 and remodelled 1529-47. The gardens and many of the decorations of the interior were not completed until the end of the century. Kings and emperors were entertained here by the renowned Andrea, Charles V being included among the royal trains.



FIG. 220. CREDENZA, FROM THE VICINITY OF VENICE. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SALVADONI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 221. WALNUT CREDENZA, FROM THE VICINITY OF VERONA. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF CHAS. A. PLATT, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

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of the sixteenth and in the first decades of the seventeenth centuries. In England, in Knole House, there are pieces of furniture executed in silver for James I, while we have documents confirming the fact that the Galerie des Glaces, at Versailles, was most magnificently furnished with tables of the same description. Thomas Gray, who was in Italy during the eighteenth century, also speaks of the silver tables in the Palazzo Doria in his illuminating account of the furnishings of this palace. After remarking "I should make you sick of marble,

if I told you how it was lavished here upon the porticoes, the balustrades, and terraces, the lowest of which extends to the sea," he tells us that "the inside is by no means answerable to the outward magnificence; the furniture seems to be as old as the founder of the family. Their great embossed silver tables tell you, in bas-relief, his victories at sea; how he entertained the Emperor Charles, and how he refused the sovereignty of the Commonwealth when it was offered him; the rest is old-fashioned velvet chairs and Gothic tapestries."

Nearly two centuries later Lady Morgan records the decayed and melancholy splendour of these ornate interiors. She tells us that "the sole occupant of these magnificent structures (where there is any) is a cobbler or a stocking-grafter, who pays for being permitted to ply his profession, amidst the sculptures of Michael Angelo and the frescos of Carloni,¹ by keeping out dogs, or preventing the idle and filthy from sleeping on the stairs or corridors—all open



FIG. 222. CARVED WOOD CABINET. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

¹Giovanni Carbone (1590-1630) and Giovanni Battista Carbone (1594-1680).

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FIG. 223. CARVED WOOD CABINET. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
NEW YORK CITY

to public intrusion." She writes of her visit to the Palazzo Durazzo,¹ that, after repeatedly ringing at the entrance to the ante-room on the Mezzari nobili superiori she was at last admitted "by a man with a boot on one hand and a brush in the other—who, at once understanding the object of her visit, drew on a fine old livery coat, which hung upon a marble bust of Filippo Parodi, and led the way through that long and interminable suite of apartments, whose walls were enriched with chefs-d'œuvre of the arts, whose floors were marble and whose roofs were gold. Galleries, cabinets, terraces, rooms variously named and variously decorated, appeared in endless succession—all covered with dust,

touched by decay, and abandoned to solitude." A list of notable palaces follows, "all characterised, like those described, by the generic feature of Genoese sumptuousness; all filled with pictures, gilding, arabesques, frescos, moths, and cobwebs. Ancient splendour and present desolation are the images stamped upon these patrician abodes, which the wealth of Europe once assisted to raise, when the merchants of Genoa were the creditors of all the potentates."²

Vicenza, the home of Scamozzi, and the great Andrea Palladio, was one of the most important centres of domestic architecture of the Late Renaissance.³ Montaigne on his visit there in 1580, when it was at the height of its

¹This is evidently the larger Durazzo palace known as the Palazzo Marcello Durazzo begun in 1556, as Lady Morgan also mentions the smaller palace of the nephew Philip, the Palazzo Durazzo-Pallavicini, built in the seventeenth century.

²"Lady Morgan's Tour in Italy." London, 1824. Vol. I, chap. XI.

³Banister Fletcher, in his "Andrea Palladio, his Life and Works," gives plans, elevations, and descriptions of many of Palladio's Vicenza palaces, including the Palazzi Thiene, Valmarana, Barbarino and in addition to Porto, the last named with its fine courtyard surrounded by a colonnade of Composite columns which, two stories in height, support an entablature surmounted with a balustrade.



FIG. 224. LIBRARY CABINET. TUSCAN, ABOUT 1550-60
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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beauty, tells us it was "full of noblemen's palaces," while John Evelyn, who visited there in the succeeding century, declares that "this sweet Towne has more well built Palaces than any of its dimensions in Italy, besides a number begun and not yet finished (but of stately design)."

Florence, while not so prolific in palace building, fostered a most important industry.¹ Cosimo I (1537-74), cruel and merciless tyrant that he was, raised to a high degree the political importance of Tuscany. The first ten years of his rule he spent in strengthening his position. Afterward he redecorated and enlarged the Palazzo Vecchio² and the Pitti Palace. He and his successor, Francesco, with the assistance of Vasari and Bronzino, endeavoured to bring together the scattered masterpieces of the Medici collection, for which Vasari designed the Uffizi Palace, where most of these treasures are still housed.

The important "Florentine Tapestry Manufactory" was founded by Cosimo. He brought from Flanders Nicholas Karcher and Jean Van der Roost who taught the art to a number of Florentines. The industry soon grew to such importance as to rival the Flemish output and even to surpass it in colour and design. Renowned Florentine masters, among whom may be included Vasari, made designs for the Flemish weavers. Giovanni della Strada who worked in oil and fresco, was, according to Vasari, principally occupied in preparing cartoons for these weavers. He supplied a number for the tapestries used in the various chambers of the Palazzo Vecchio. These were to correspond with the fresco decorations of the ceilings and upper parts of the walls that had been executed by Vasari, as this art historian relates, "to the end that the tapestries below may be in harmony with the pictures above." For the Halls of Saturn, Ceres, Jupiter, and others, Giovanni made designs for about thirty pieces, besides those for the

¹The magnificent palaces reared in the previous periods overshadowed all succeeding efforts, yet the Palazzo Uguccione, by Folli (1550), the Palazzo Lardarel, by Dosio (1558), the Palazzo Guigni, by Amanati (1560), as well as the Palazzo del Uffizi, by Vasari, and the Palazzo Altoviti built by Cosimo I's great rival, Rinaldo degli Albizzi, are only a few of the Florentine houses of importance built during this period.

²Vasari redecorated the apartments in the Palazzo Vecchio that had been occupied by Cosimo, for the reception of Francesco I's bride, Joanne of Austria. In the courtyard scenes of Austrian towns were painted in compliment to the bride, while the columns were covered with the stucco ornament which still remains, though without its former gilding.



FIG. 225. CABINET. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE TOLENTINO GALLERIES, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 226. CREDENZA. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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upper apartment occupied by the Princess. Four of these Vasari records, "are devoted to the virtues of women, and display histories of Roman, Hebrew, Greek, and Tuscan ladies, taken from the lives of Sabina, Esther, Penelope, and Gualdrada." For one of the halls the same master made fourteen panels delineating the "Life of Man" and for those in the apart-



FIG. 227. CARVED WOOD CABINET. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

ments of the Prince he produced various designs illustrating stories from the lives of David, Solomon, and others. Nor was this mode of decoration confined to the town palaces of the Medici; for the Villa of Poggio-a-Caiano, we learn, "twenty chambers are to be supplied with arras now daily making progress." At the suggestion of the Duke a delightful series of hunting scenes was designed by Giovanni, exhibiting "all kinds of animals of the chase, various modes of fowling and fishing with the most singular and beautiful fancies."¹ This craft lasted about two hundred years, closing with the death of the last Medici grand duke in 1737. At this time there were scattered among the numerous Medici palaces and villas one hundred and twenty-four of these tapestries, besides a number of Gobelin and Flemish weaves. All of these were presented by the last Medici, the Electress Anna Maria Ludovico, to the city of

¹"Vasari's Lives," Mrs. Foster's translation, Vol. V., p. 483.

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Florence, where in the Galleria degli Arrazi they may be studied and compared with the fine Gobelin and Flemish examples that are hung with them.

The country house or villa became fashionable and the patrician families actually beggared themselves in the building and maintenance of these enormous estates and vast edifices. Throughout the sixteenth century and especially



FIG. 228. CREDENZA. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

in the second half, many beautiful villas were built along the Brenta, on the hills of Vicenza and Verona, in the plain of Friuli and in the Marca Trevigiana in the severe classic style of Palladio. They were embellished with sculpture and painting by the renowned masters of that day, including the great Veronese, whose works enriched villas at Fanzólo, Thiene, Romaziol, Maser, and numerous others that we know of only from old records. The Brenta is especially rich in villas. Mrs. Piozzi, on her visit in the eighteenth century to this enchanting pleasure ground of the Venetian patricians, seeing these fair pleasure houses, as well as those erected in the seventeenth and eighteenth

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centuries, before ruin, desolation, and destruction had wrought their havoc, writes of "the sublimity of their architecture, the magnificence of their orangeries, the happy construction of the cool arcades, and the genial air of festivity which breathes upon the banks of this truly wizard stream, planted with dancing not weeping willows."¹ The now-ruined and melancholy



FIG. 229. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF SIG. LUIGI ORSELLI, NEW YORK CITY

"Villa Malcontenta," built by Palladio with a loggia having Ionic columns and faded frescos by Zelotti, was at one time the scene of many splendid entertainments. In 1574 the Foscari entertained Henry III of France there, when this monarch, on passing up the Brenta, expressed his admiration and amazement at the number and splendour of the villas that graced its shores.

That bizarre genius, Anton Francesco Doni, who enjoyed the hospitality of the Venetian patricians in their villas, has left us a treatise on the method of building and adorning a villa of which he distinguishes four kinds,—the

¹"Glimpses of Italian Society in the 18th Century." Mrs. Piozzi.



FIG. 230. ARMADIO. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SACRISTY OF THE CHURCH OF SANTO SPIRITO, FLORENCE

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princely villa, or pleasure house; the gentleman's villa, meant for repose; the merchant's villa, designed for economy; and the artisan's or farmer's villa, meant for practical use. The villa of Francesco Morisini at Noale was an ideal gentleman's country house with "clear streams of water flowing through the greenery, a large and handsome entrance leading to a cortile, a colonnade on one side communicating with well-appointed guest chambers having a loggia with great windows."¹ Vasari tells us that Federico Priuli erected a more princely country house at Tre Ville in the Trevigiano during this period, having its exterior as well as its interior painted by Giuseppe Porta del Salviati (1520–1575).² Doni claims that the floors were polished like mirrors while the carved, painted, and gilded ceilings were unrivalled. Paintings by the great masters, including Titian, hung on the walls, while the chairs, carved bedsteads, hangings, embroidered curtains, and canopies were superb. Extravagance was so rampant in furnishings that in 1595 and 1598 laws were enacted limiting those of a governor's villa. He was forbidden to hang the hall and chambers in silk. Satin, camlet, and stamped leather, unfigured, was permitted, but only to a certain height up the walls. Tapestries could be used in one room only, while carpets, table cloths of silk and gold, and silk window curtains were allowed only in the principal room. Not more than twelve chairs were permitted to be upholstered with velvet or silk. Carved and gilded benches, carved and gilded doors, carved or painted walnut beds, bed curtains and coverlets embroidered in gold were not allowed. Later the severity of this law was relaxed and in 1770 we find six thousand ounces of plate instead of the fifteen-hundred-ounce allowance of the late sixteenth century.³

That ideal pleasure villa of the Gonzaghi, the Palazzo del Tè, was completed by Guilio Romano in 1535 and was embellished with frescos by this master as well as with stucco decorations by the renowned Primaticcio before Federigo II permitted him to go to the Court of Francis I. Though completed during the High Renaissance and called by Symonds the most

¹Doni, *Attavanta, Villa*. Firenze, 1857.

²Vita di Francesco da Salviati XII, 81, ed. Lemonnier.

³Molmenti.



FIG. 231. CARVED WOOD CABINET. LIGURIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 232. CABINET. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE.

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FIG. 233. CARVED WOOD CABINET. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

perfect production of that epoch, it combines with the more delicate and classical charm of Romano's earlier Raphaelesque manner the later fulness of his splendour-loving fancy, marking the border line between the decoration of the High Renaissance and the Decline. It is one of the earliest villas built in the new medium of stucco which became the favourite material for the vast villas of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Federico preferred stone for the new villa,

but as there was none procurable, Romano, as Vasari says, contented himself with brick and other substitutes which he covered with stucco, and out of these materials made columns, bases, capitals, cornices, doors and windows, all in the most perfect proportion and beautifully decorated. This monument of art remained in favour with the Gonzaga dukes for over two hundred years. It was an ideal setting for the lavish entertainments of the extravagant and magnificent Guglielmo and Vincenzo I.

The Villa Pratolino is representative of the more ambitious Late Renaissance villas of Tuscany. Begun by Francesco I in 1573, he used, as Montaigne relates, all the five senses in its embellishment. We are greatly indebted to Montaigne for an account of this villa just after its completion. Though like most foreign travellers of his day he was interested in the curious, and unfavourably critical of dissimilar modes of living, he gives some of the pleasant details of the house and gardens. In his time, he says, it was claimed that the house



FIG. 234. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE VILLA REALE DI POGGIO A CAIANO, NEAR FLORENCE

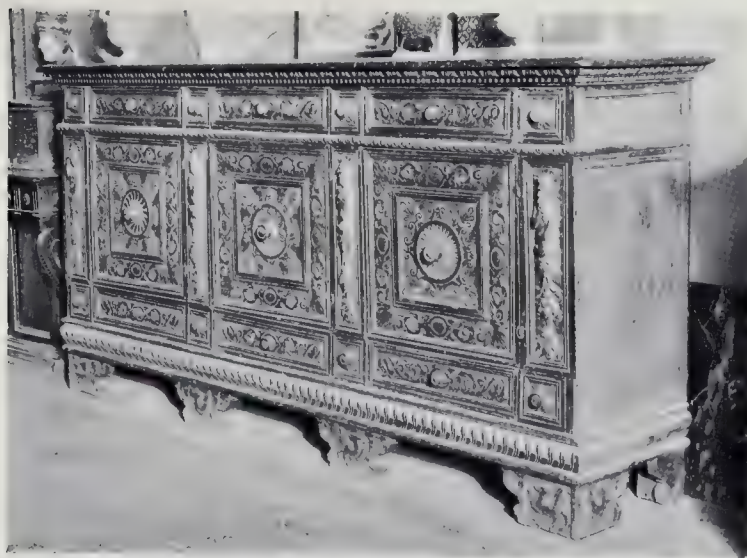


FIG. 235. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. LOMBARD, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 236. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA WITH INTARSIA. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF THE DUVEIN BROTHERS, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 237. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY

ITALIAN FURNITURE

contained one hundred and twenty rooms, "and ten or twelve of the finest of these we saw, the furniture being pretty, but not magnificent." He further says: "The beauty and splendour of this place cannot be set forth properly by details. Below the mansion is an alley, fifty feet wide and about five hundred paces in length, which at great cost has been made level. On either side are long and



FIG. 238. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE CASTELLO DI VINCIGLIATA, FLORENCE

very beautiful benches of worked stone, every five or ten paces. Along by these benches are built in the wall the mouths of artificial fountains, so that all down the alley are jets of water." He speaks of a marble table in one of the chambers, "with places for six, each of which is fitted with a cover to be raised by a ring. Beneath each of these covers is a basin with a supply of fresh water, wherewith each guest might cool his glass." John Evelyn on his visit to this Medici country house about the middle of the following century, while sharing Montaigne's appreciation of the gardens, is more enthusiastic about the furniture as he informs us that "the palace may compare with any in

ITALIAN FURNITURE

Italy for furniture of tapestry, beds, etc., and the gardens are delicious and full of fountains."

For the Farnese, Vignola built the Villa Caprarola, a royal pleasure house that retains much of its original splendour. Vasari gives us an excellent description of this palace in which he sums up the artistic ambitions of the period.



FIG. 239. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE VILLA REALE DI POGGIO A CAIANO, NEAR FLORENCE

He writes: "The cardinal showed as much judgment in selecting his architect as in undertaking such a noble work, which though situated in a place where it can give but little pleasure to the generality, is marvelously placed for one who wishes occasionally to withdraw from the worries and tumult of the city. The building is pentagonal and divided into four parts, excluding the front containing the principal door, and a loggia forty palms broad by eighty long. On one side is a spiral staircase ten palms in width, with a light of twenty palms in the middle. It ascends to the third floor and rests upon double columns with cornices following the steps, both rich and varied, in the Doric,

ITALIAN FURNITURE

Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite orders, with rich balustrades, niches, and other fancies, rendering it most beautiful. Opposite, on the other side of the loggia, is a suite of rooms, beginning with a round hall of the size of the staircase, and leading to a large room eighty palms long and forty broad decorated with stucco and paintings of the birth of Jupiter, his nursing by the goat Amaltea, his cor-



FIG. 240. CARVED WOOD CREDENZA. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE VILLA REALE DI POGGIO A CAIANO, NEAR FLORENCE

onation, and two other scenes, one, of her being placed in heaven among the forty-eight images and the second also relating to the same goat (*capra*), all alluding to the name Caprarola. The walls contain perspectives of buildings drawn by Vignola, coloured by his son-in-law, of great beauty, and make the room appear larger. Next this is a hall of forty palms, nearly in the following angle, containing paintings of Spring. Following this, to the beginning of a tower, three rooms, forty palms by thirty, are entered. The first is decorated with stucco and painting representing Summer, the second for Autumn, and the third, toward the north, for Winter. Hitherto I have only spoken of half the

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 241. FURNITURE CARVING. SECOND HALF OF THE
XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

pentagon on the right above the cellars containing the kitchen, buttery, larders, and offices. On the left are an equal number of rooms of the same size. With the five angles of the pentagon Vignola formed a round court with doors to each room entering into a round loggia eighteen palms broad. The diameter of the court is ninety-five palms five inches. The gardens are filled with rich and varied fountains, graceful shrubberies and lawns, and every requisite for such a royal villa. On mounting the spiral staircase to the first floor one finds as many rooms as those mentioned above and a

chapel in addition, opposite the principal staircase. In the hall above that of Jupiter, Taddeo and his assistants made rich decorations in stucco of the acts of illustrious members of the Farnese house."

It would be impossible to note in so limited a space the various villas that sprang up in the environs of Rome, Florence, and Genoa, besides those of



FIG. 242. CARVED WOOD CABINET. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 243. CARVED WOOD WRITING CABINET. LATE XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF MESSRS. P. W. FRENCH & CO., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 244. CARVED WOOD WRITING CABINET. TUSCAN, LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF CARL W. HAMILTON, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 245. CARVED WOOD WRITING CABINET. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF CARL W. HAMILTON, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

ITALIAN FURNITURE

Venetia and Lombardy. For these a quantity of furniture designed in the new manner was produced, which adds considerably to the number of pieces surviving from this period.

The monumental scale and pedantic correctness of the exterior are re-



FIG. 246. INTERIOR OF LATE XVI CENTURY WRITING CABINET

flected in the important apartments of the interior. The late sixteenth century interior is marked by its vast formal plan, and the great growth in scale of its subordinate parts. Lofty ceilings and vast expanses of wall surfaces were covered with brilliant frescos peopled with heroic forms. In some of the enormous apartments, especially of the Villas of Palladio, when walls were not covered with frescos with figures, elaborate architectural schemes with pilasters, cornices, niches with figures, and pediments over doors were



FIG. 247. WRITING CABINET. LOMBARD, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF W. HINCKLE SMITH, ESQ., PHILADELPHIA, PA.

ITALIAN FURNITURE

painted *en grisaille* in the most deceptive manner. In the Palazzo del Tè is an example of an earlier architectural scheme painted in the same manner. In one of the chambers a coffered ceiling, decorated in gold and green, has a frieze of putti intertwined with arabesques. On the walls an elaborate architectural scheme is painted with coupled pilasters, between which are antique figures and busts pictured in the same manner. Similar schemes are found in many of the Venetian villas. Painted on the walls in the vestibule of the Villa of Fanzolo, is a pergola with bronze figures on either side, while in the same villa the great hall has Corinthian columns well given in *chiaroscuro*. This was undoubtedly done to reduce the tremendous cost that would have been entailed in carrying out these designs in a more concrete substance. From the decline of the Renaissance throughout the eighteenth century, it seems that labour and the skill of the artificers were held at a lower estimate than the materials that were required. Yet designs were sometimes executed in marbles or other fine materials and in some Florentine cabinet work executed for Cosimo I, the most extravagant materials were employed.

The Villa Giacomelli (1580) is one of the finest examples of the monumental Palladian villa, with heroic fresco decorations by the illustrious Veronese. The great dining hall, with its lofty arched ceiling, peopled with a spectacular assemblage of classic gods and goddesses, has on the wall over the entrance a splendid banquet scene. Up along the sides of the room is painted, in a most realistic manner, a running balustrade from which figures in silken cinquecento costumes with parrots, monkeys, and dogs looked down



FIG. 248. WRITING CABINET. SECOND
HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 249. UPPER BODY OF A WRITING CABINET
LOMBARD, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE LAGATTI VASISCHII COLLECTION, MILAN

on equally picturesque hosts. In the same villa are luxuriously furnished bedrooms and living rooms with frescoed ceilings and walls. On the walls of one of the bed-chambers are decorations in the Pompeian style in which pleasing little landscapes are combined with grotesques, while several others are painted with architectural schemes and contain their old canopied beds.

The famous Gallery of the Palazzo Farnese—

painted by Agostino Caracci toward the end of the sixteenth century—of which John Evelyn writes on his visit to Rome in 1644, that “nothing is more rare in art, so deepe and well studied are all the figures that it would require more judgment than I confess I had, to determine whether they were flat or emboss’d.” He speaks of another chamber “painted in chiaroscuro, representing the fabulous history of Hercules,” and of another hung with crimson damask embroidered with gold.

Walls were often hung with velvets, tapestries, and other fine stuffs. The deep-toned red velvet which came into fashion for wall covering in the early part of the sixteenth century was still used in the state rooms of the magnificent palaces in the early decades of this period and especially at Venice where the wealth of the Venetian nobles allowed them to indulge in this passion for hanging walls with the richest of velvets as well as damasks and other silks. A Venetian interior in the Palazzo Trevisan, hung with painted silk, aroused the admiration of the Florentine Ambassador on the occasion of the marriage of Bianca Cappello with the Grand Duke of Tuscany in the second



FIG. 250. CHEST OF DRAWERS. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

ITALIAN FURNITURE

half of the sixteenth century. For the reception of Henry III of France the old Venetian Palazzo Foscari was redecorated. The vestibule was hung with tapestry and the ceiling was covered with blue cloth sewn with stars. On the floor above, the three bedrooms reserved for the king give some idea of the richness of the furnishings. The first room had a great chimney piece of precious marbles and a table of black marble with a green velvet cover. The hangings were of cloth-of-gold and crimson silk relieved by strips of cloth-of-silver wrought in gold with figures and monograms. The carpet was of crimson velvet and a gilded arm chair under a cloth-of-gold canopy stood by the bed whose sheets had borders worked with gold thread and crimson silk. The furniture of the second chamber was very similar, the hangings here were of blue satin semé of fleur-de-lys relieved with strips of yellow satin. The third chamber selected by the king was hung with green and gold brocade. The gilded bed had curtains of crimson silk, the canopied chair was hung

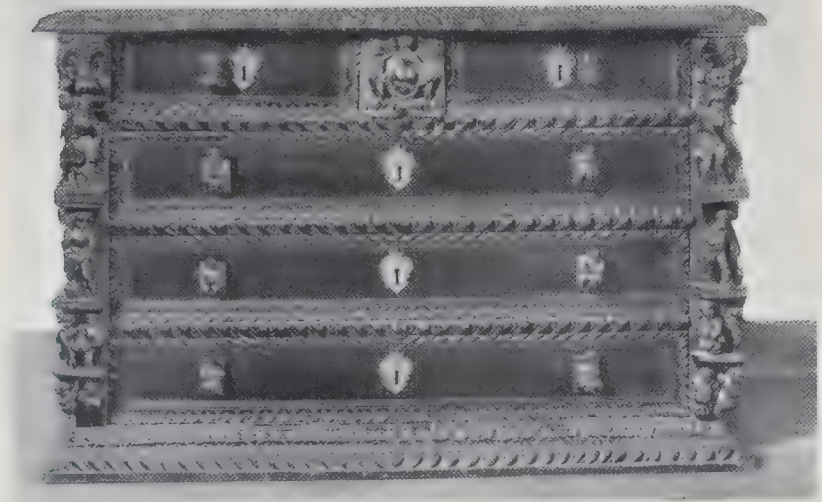


FIG. 251. CHEST OF DRAWERS. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE CASTELLO DI VINCIGLIATA, NEAR FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 252. CHEST OF DRAWERS. END OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE PALAZZO MANSI, LUCCA

with cloth-of-gold and the table was of alabaster.¹ Though furnished for the reception of a king, the descriptions of these apartments are of great value as there are practically no interiors of this period with their furnishings intact to-day. They give not only an idea of the furniture and the colour schemes but a picture of the prevailing passion for oppressive sumptuousness as well.

Francesco Sansovino, writing of the Venetian interiors in the second half of the sixteenth century, says he cannot describe their incredible richness.² Giacomo Franco, also writes in 1610: "The buildings of this marvellous city arrest the eyes of them that admire it from without. But, seen within, one is dumfounded and amazed at the abundance of beautiful pictures, sculpture, and other precious ornaments, so that, should I attempt to recount it, I should seem a liar to all that have not seen it with their own eyes."³

¹ DeNolhac and Solerti: "Il viaggio in Italia di Enrico III," p. 109.

² F. Sansovino: "Venetia," p. 381.

³ Franco, *Habiti* (Martinioni, 40. Venet. 1663).

ITALIAN FURNITURE

Beginning with the sixteenth century leather hangings were sometimes used instead of tapestries.¹ Montaigne while on the "Grand Tour" (1580-81)



FIG. 253. LEGGIO. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE CATHEDRAL OF SIENA

says that in Rome "apartments are ordinarily somewhat better furnished than in Paris, especially as they have a great deal of gilt leather with which

¹L. T. Belgrano, *op. cit.* p. 77.

ITALIAN FURNITURE

the walls of apartments of a certain grade are hung."¹ He relates that for the same price he could have "hired a more luxurious apartment hung with

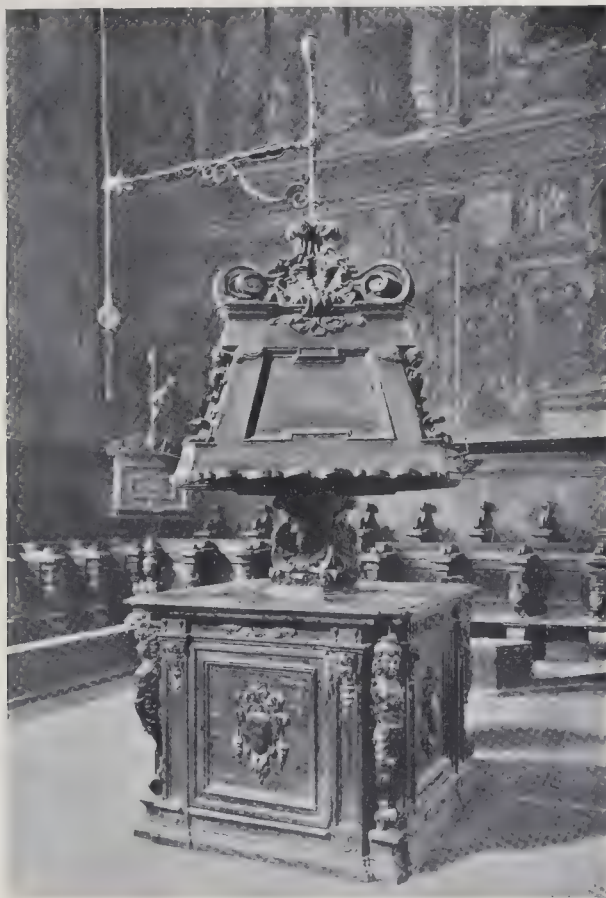


FIG. 254. LEGGIO. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM S. MARIA NOVELLO, FLORENCE

silk and cloth-of-gold, quite like a royal palace." He decided that the magnificence of the furniture was not only useless in itself but keeping it from

¹Among the wedding gifts of Donna Bonna-Sforza (married 1517) are mentioned forty-eight sets of stamped leather hangings.

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 255. LEGGIO. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

hurt would be too great a burden, as "there was not a bed in the place which was not of the estimated value of four or five hundred crowns."¹

Sculptural as well as fresco decorations were the ambition of the great palaces. By the end of the century collections of antique sculpture had been formed and these, together with modern work in the ancient style, adorned the houses of the princes. John Evelyn naïvely writes of an apartment in the Farnese palace that was "totally environed with statues; especially observable was that so renowned piece of Venus looking backward

over her shoulder, and divers other naked figures by the old Greek masters." He speaks of the adjoining chamber "full of statues most of them y^e heads of philosophers, very antiq." The villas rivalled the palaces in these ambitious schemes of decoration. In their vast halls and salons, numerous figures, busts, and vases were arranged on pedestals and brackets, besides being placed in niches and roundels and on magnificent stone tables of classic design; nor were they confined to the interiors of the house, they adorned the terraces and gardens as well.

Stucco decorations, which so often played an important part in the scheme of the interior, sometimes achieved fine decorative effects. In the first half of the century Primaticcio had established the vogue for this style of decoration that became so popular in the Late Renaissance, as well as so dominant and exaggerated in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

¹Water's "The Journal of Montaigne Travels," p. 73, vol. II. London, 1903.



FIG. 256. CASSONE. MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON



FIG. 257. CASSONE. ROMAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE VILLA TAVERNA, FRASCATI. NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF THE DUVEEN BROTHERS, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 258. CASSONE. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

Those in the Palazzo del Tè executed by the famous Primaticcio are among the most beautiful of the earlier work in this style. On the vaulting of several chamber ceilings, combined with the frescos of Giulio Romano, are panels of charming classical figures in flowing robes in low white relief on a pale green ground, while in the Camera delle Medaglie are sixteen beautiful panels of the same relief representing recreations and activities of life. In the same apartment the panelled ceiling—with signs of the zodiac and mythological and historical figures—is executed in the same medium. Primaticcio's chefs-d'œuvres are to be seen in the Sala degli Stucchi. Filling the double frieze of this beautiful apartment are countless figures in antique Roman costumes while in the following chamber there is a similar frieze with mythological and symbolical figures on a marbled ground with reddish veining, as well as various panels and medallions on marbled grounds of different colours.

In the dilapidated old town of Sabbioneta, near Mantua, the ruined Palazzo del Giardino contains traces of charming stucco decorations such as adorned the less pretentious houses of the Late Renaissance. Several of the ground floor rooms are now inhabited by a peasant who, with his humble household utilities, is naturally oblivious to the fact that these decayed frescos and fragments of stucco decorations were once associated with tapestried walls, fine furniture, and other objets d'art. Placed directly below the frieze in one of the apartments are shell-like roundels with pedestals on which were placed marble busts. Besides the ruins of a great white ballroom with carved ceiling and wall decoration of stucco and painting, there is an enchanting little Gabinetto del Bagno with its mass of convoluted stucco foliage and marble pavement of red, white, and faded black. In the wing of the Reggia at Mantua erected by Bertani in 1562, is a long apartment known as the Loggia dei Frutti. Its well-preserved stucco decorations of exquisitely modelled festoons and garlands, composed of fruits and leaves painted in naturalistic colours, ornamenting the cornice and the beams of the coffered ceiling, are among the finest decorations in the palace.

When ceilings were not frescoed they were panelled and coffered in elaborate designs and were sumptuous in colour. Chimney pieces were still

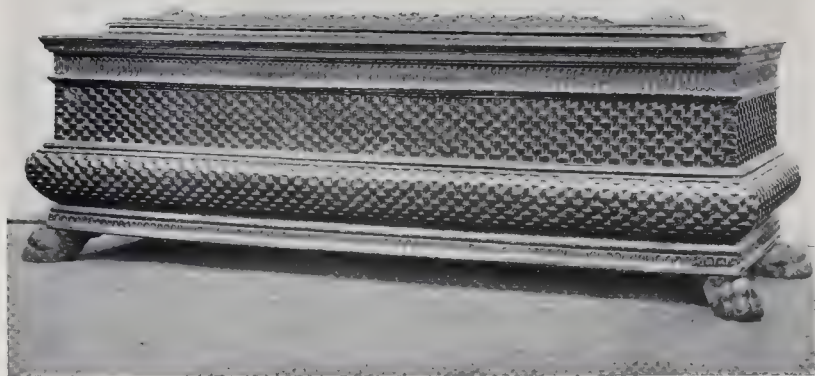


FIG. 259. CASSONE. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE CASTELLO DI VINCIGLIATA, NEAR FLORENCE

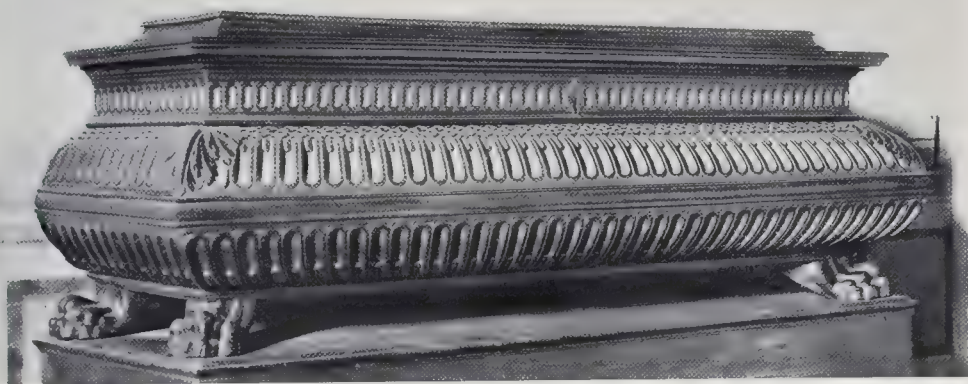


FIG. 260. CASSONE. TUSCAN, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

monumental and, like the architraves of doors, were more vigorously moulded and without the delicate rhythmic ornament of the former epoch. Colossal caryatides and bold figures often supported the heavy architraves of the chimney piece.

In these large apartments, with their big cartouche decorations combined with vigorous figures painted or modelled in the round, we can readily see



FIG. 261. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE VILLA REALE DI POGGIO A CAIANO, NEAR FLORENCE

how the credenza or cassone of the preceding epoch—with its delicate moulds and exquisite intarsia, painted or carved decoration, designed for backgrounds with the same fine detail—would dwindle into insignificance. On the other hand, the more vigorous designs with their bold relief and perfectly scaled parts made a fine showing when placed in these interiors.

Sculpture and architecture exerted a strong influence on furniture design, which follows closely their development. About the middle of the century there was an abundant use of carving in exaggerated scale and relief, with the human figure and the grotesque prominent, also a decided enlargement of form, encouraged by the enormous interiors with their vigorous decorations.

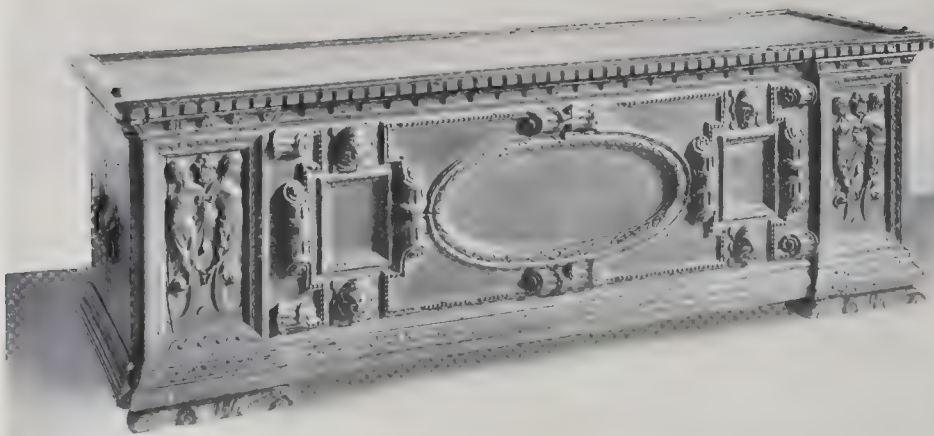


FIG. 262. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. VENETIAN, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. JOHN INNESS KANE, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 263. CARVED WOOD CASSONE. VENETIAN OR LOMBARD, FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

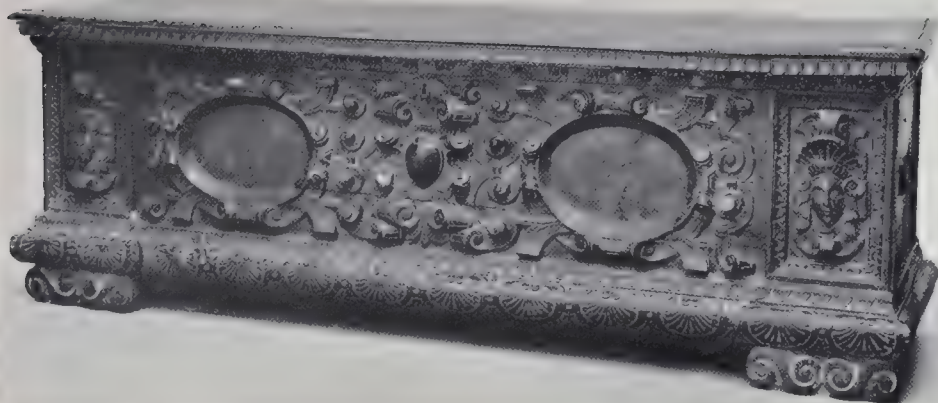


FIG. 264. CASSONE. VENETIAN OR UMBRIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 265. CASSONE. VENETIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

ITALIAN FURNITURE

Projecting moulds are bold and complicated, and in the work of the late sixteenth century the mould without ornamentation is preferred. Entablatures and bases are more elaborate and complicated, often breaking around the orders when used. In panel work the projecting panel is prominent, while its form is more varied, being rounded often at the top and bottom. In the curves of brackets and consoles, and in those outlining stretchers of chairs



FIG. 266. CASSONE WITH INTARSIA DECORATIONS. LOMBARD, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

and tables, chair backs, etc., we find the reverse curve, concave and convex meeting at a point. This form was introduced in the second quarter of the sixteenth century and is the prevailing curve line in baroque design. The boldly modelled caryatid of the mid-century was later succeeded by a panelled or decorated pilaster that tapered toward the base, as well as a colder type of pilaster showing the influence of Palladian design.

Though the furniture design of each province still showed its individual characteristics, these were less marked than in the work of the earlier styles.

ITALIAN FURNITURE

In former periods the local geniuses drew their influence from the same source, yet the provincial traditions and the local materials produced a decided variation of style. About the middle of the sixteenth century these traits became less obvious, as practically all architecture became a direct imitation of Roman models and greater universality was manifested alike in painting, sculpture, and furniture design.



FIG. 267. CASSONE. VENETIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

From many old documents we learn of the great richness of beds and their furnishings. In the second half of the century the bed in the "French fashion"—with a canopy supported on four posts and hung with rich stuffs—was in favour. An example designed in this style is shown in Figure 205. Four slender columns, entwined with a flat decoration of vines done in gold, support a canopy whose blue and gold cornice is crowned at each corner with a carved and gilded vase from which flames issue forth in a decorative manner. Suspended from the simply moulded rails, raised on turned and carved supports,

ITALIAN FURNITURE

are pendant-like carvings with cherub heads. These, as well as the brackets placed where the rails join the uprights, are of decided baroque character. The ceiling of the canopy which is shown in the next illustration is the most important feature of the bed. Designed in the manner of many architectural ceilings, it is panelled with various forms each filled with painted decorations having the character of the work of the school of Volterra.¹ In the centre rectangular panel "The Coronation of the Virgin" is pictured, while in the variously shaped ones that surround it are sibyls, groups of angels, and other sacred subjects.

Of similar design, but of much later date, is the bed shown in Figure 208. The canopy—resting on shafts with simple bands of decorations and carved capitals—has a moulded cornice, below which are placed mouldings carved with a leaf-and-bead decoration. The rails have pendant ornaments of curved form and convex panels framed with moulds, all embellished with a fine line decoration. Carved vase-form turnings with rectangular moulded bases support the bed. The ceiling of the vaulted canopy (Figure 209) is elaborately designed, with numerous panels, filled with painted decorations, radiating from a centre medallion bearing a coat of arms. Filling these radiating panels are motifs composed of little land- and sea-scapes, putti, floral and other fanciful adornments resembling much of the decoration of the early seventeenth century.

Dating from the last decade of the century is the following carved and gilded four-post bed coming from the castle of the Duke of Verzuolo. The elaborately ornamented head-board is composed of a series of arches each filled with a shell. These arches rest on pilasters carved with angels in high relief, the whole being surmounted by a carved and pierced cresting of foliated scrolls flowing from the centre medallion embellished with an Annunciation scene in low relief. Supporting the original purple velvet valance trimmed with gold galloon and fringes, are four shafts having the lower parts carved with winged amorini dancing and playing, and the upper portion enriched with spiral turning, ending with vases placed above the canopy in the manner of Figure 205.

¹Giovanni Ricciarelli, known as Volterra, flourished 1568-90. He was a nephew of the greater Volterra whose real name was Daniele Ricciarelli. The latter was the greater painter, a pupil of Sodoma, and a master highly thought of during his period.

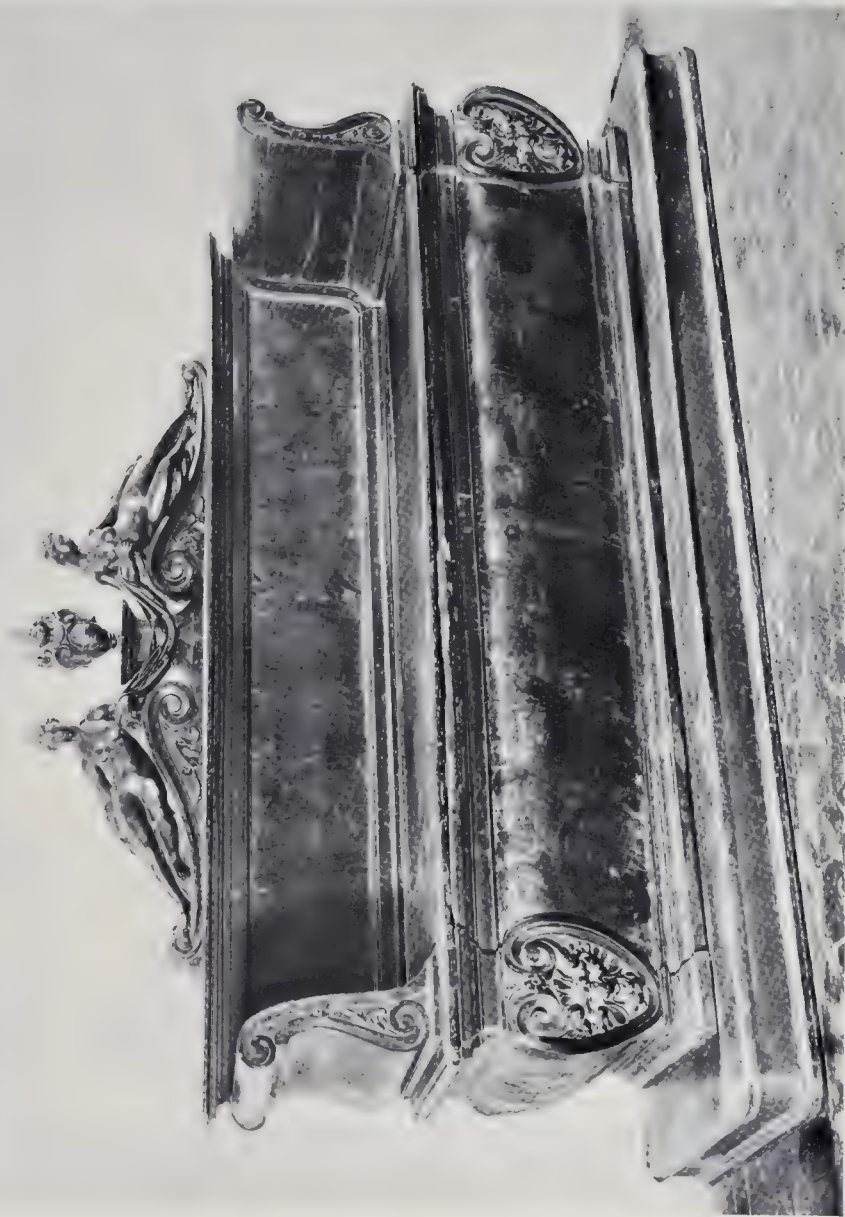


FIG. 268. CASSAPANCA. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

Important beds of this period were sometimes without canopies, as Figure 211 testifies. The four posts with spiral flutings and bands carved with putti, swags, and shields are surmounted by vase forms with more putti, these decorations being similar to, and of a date contemporary with, those seen in Figure 210. The simple rails supported on bulbous turnings were undoubtedly covered with a rich counterpane or bed cover in the manner of all important beds of this period, while against the richly carved head board were pillows similar to those shown in Figure 207. Following, in Figures 212 and 213, are variations of the same design. One, with fluted and astragalled posts, topped with an artichoke form, has an ornamental head board formed of a succession of arches resting on turnings; these arches support a richly carved cresting of baroque form, while the low foot piece is outlined with similar forms. The bed shown on the opposite page, though of more simple structure, is richer with a more graceful baroque decoration, composed of urns, swags, and other characteristic motifs.



FIG. 269. CASSAPANCA. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

The cradles of the patrician, equally splendid, survive in numbers, and show the same tendencies of design as are displayed in the stately beds. Figure 214 is a Tuscan model with a characteristic form and decoration, while the one that follows it is of more princely origin, bearing the arms of the Salviati of Florence on the carved escutcheon of the square head board. The incurving body is carved with a slightly curved fluting and acanthus leaves in the manner of Figure 214, while the straight sides are ornamented with gilded medallions terminating in the leaf. The bases of the rockers are carved as well.

By the middle of the century, throughout Italy, the credenza had become the important article of furniture in the ordinary dwelling as well as in the magnificent palace. The number and variety of fine examples still surviving attest their popularity. As in the former period, the favourite composition is with two or three doors separated and flanked by pilasters or narrow vertical



FIG. 270. CASSAPANCA. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE DUVEEN BROTHERS, NEW YORK CITY

ITALIAN FURNITURE

panels that are ornamented in a variety of ways. In the frieze, placed directly over the doors, drawers are generally found, separated by corbels, grotesque marks, or other forms of decoration.

Figure 216 is a fine piece of cabinet work illustrating many characteristic traits of the period. The heavy base, carved with a kind of baroque gadroon-

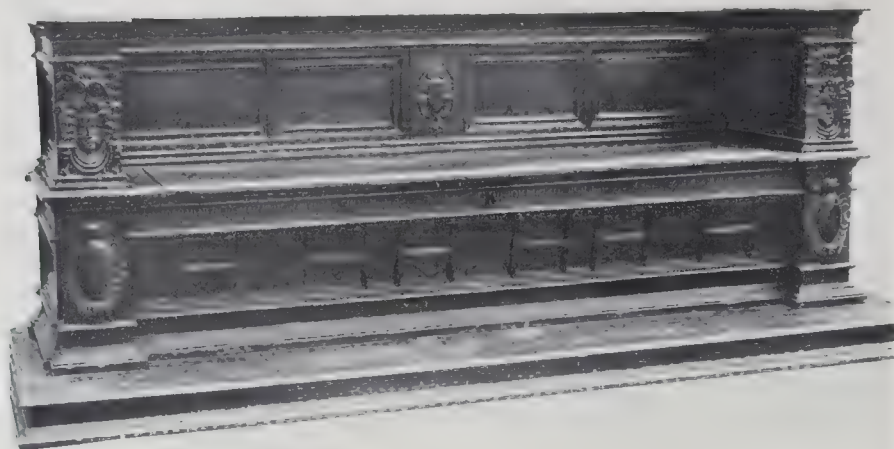


FIG. 271. CASSAPANCA. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

ing with a coat of arms placed in its centre, is still raised on lion feet. The two doors, panelled with wide and simply carved moulds, have in their centres circular medallions further framed in rectangular panels outlined with similar moulds. They are hinged to narrow vertical panels showing a variation of the characteristic raised panel work of this period, broken by circular ornaments. The frieze, with the same circular ornaments placed at wide intervals, has an entablature and cornice breaking around the pilaster panels. The ends of the cabinet are treated in a simpler manner.

Many tendencies of Late Renaissance design are displayed in Figure 217.

ITALIAN FURNITURE

The front is spaced in the usual way, while the panelled doors with knobs formed of carved rosettes have the appearance of earlier work than the decorative forms with which they are separated and flanked. The placing of columns in re-entering angles of the corner, the motif decorating the drawer, as well as the way the shafts are placed in relation to the frieze decoration, show how the desire for originality encouraged a disregard for the finer architectural



FIG. 272. CASSAPANCA. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

traditions of the preceding epoch. In the centre of the frieze appear the arms of the Medici family.

A Ligurian credenza, dating from the middle of the century, is shown in Figure 218. The simple base is an inaccurate restoration, as its elaborately carved moulds would suggest. Walnut is very susceptible to decay and worm, and it is to be expected that bases of many cabinets have suffered through centuries of unappreciation and abuse. The doors are carved with a typical Ligurian decoration, bearing a close resemblance to French designs of the periods of Henry II and Henry III, while the tapering pilasters, another marked trait of late Renaissance design, are decorated with a sort of semi-strap work

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FIG. 273. PEDESTAL. LATE
XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

pattern similar to that profusely used in English, French, and Flemish work, dating about 1600. This example being of the fifth or sixth decade of the sixteenth century inclines one to credit the origin of this ornament to Liguria, as it was less often used in other provinces of Italy. Placed between the two drawers and flanking them are grotesque carved heads, while other heads, from which flow foliated scrolls, adorn the drawers as well. The side panels also are richly carved.

The credenza in the succeeding figure exhibits a highly developed baroque design. The doors are carved with forms that recall those associated with the architecture of the period. The base mould breaks below a pilaster composed of a bracket surmounting a carved panel. In the frieze pairs of smaller brackets are placed directly over the large ones. The sides are decorated in the manner of the front and the whole displays the fine craftsmanship that is evident in much work of this type. Figure 220 is of a few years later date and shows the influence of Palladian design. Though the panel work of the doors and drawers is of earlier character, the fluted pilasters and Ionic capitals, with their heavy base moulds and frieze breaking around them, are seen in all important cabinet designs after Palladio's work became popular. The round knobs of the doors placed in the centre of circular panels were frequently used. In much cabinet work done between the years 1550 and 1580, especially in the vicinity of Verona, design shows more restraint and the coldness of Palladian work, exhibiting baroque features in a subordinate way, as illustrated in the bases of the columns of this figure. With the development of a more classic type of order there is a more sparing use of ornament, the moulds in most cases being unornamented and the preference for a more concentrated use of decoration gives an appearance of greater scale to the whole



FIG. 274. CARVED WOOD TABLE. FLORENTINE, MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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design. Figure 221 is one of those simpler and colder pieces, from the vicinity of Verona, of which many genuine examples have come into the market of recent years. The beautiful colour and velvety texture of the lighter-toned walnut give much warmth and interest to these otherwise cold and cruder pieces.

Smaller cabinets appear more frequently in this period. They have one or



FIG. 275. CARVED WOOD TABLE. FLORENTINE, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF HENRY PAYNE WHITNEY, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

two doors and, in design, resemble the larger credenze. Both Figures 222 and 223 date from the early years of the second half of the century, 223 having a heavily moulded base, without the lion feet, that was used in conjunction with the more classic type of order growing in favour about that time. It also has the coarsely carved mould that preceded those of the full, undecorated type, generally used in cabinet work influenced by Palladian design. The base, with its decorated moulds breaking around the pedestals of the pilasters—between which is placed a panel also framed with a carved mould—is a restoration of apparently correct design. Fluted and astragalled pilasters with Corinthian capitals are

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placed on either side of doors having panels with incurving corners, a practice that became more exaggerated as the century advanced and one that prevailed in seventeenth century work. Even in these smaller cabinets the broken base and entablature, the prominent mould, and the coarser type of more spotted ornament of increased scale are often employed. Figure 222, with a



FIG. 276. CARVED WOOD TABLE. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF HENRY PAYNE WHITNEY, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

gadrooned base, lion feet, and richer type of carved ornament, belongs to a period some ten years earlier than the example preceding it.

The library cabinet shown in Figure 224 not only illustrates how baroque motifs have been well subordinated to structure, but shows a higher type of design of this period. The lower body is formed of a series of doors with simple moulds enclosing raised panels of baroque form. These are separated by flat tapering consoles crowned with grotesque heads, forming pilaster decorations around which break the moulds of the base and entablature. The circular ornaments of the frieze, placed directly over the pilasters, as well as those at

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the corners of the doors, appear frequently in cabinet work of this period. The upper body is spaced into divisions of shelves flanked by fluted and astragalled pilasters having fanciful Ionic capitals with grotesques, the whole being crowned with an interrupted frieze, simply carved.

Perhaps the following similar form was originally an apothecary's cabinet,



FIG. 277. CARVED WOOD TABLE. NORTH ITALIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

on the shelves of which were once arrayed majolica jars of beautiful form and decoration. The cabinet work in apothecary shops, as well as that found in ecclesiastical edifices and public libraries, was often of the highest order. The lower body of this example shows variety of spacing, the double doors, together with the narrow vertical panels flanking them, illustrating excellent late sixteenth century panel work with their full projecting moulds without ornamentation, raised bevelled panels and modified lozenge forms. The fluted and astragalled pilasters of the upper part, resting on brackets carved with winged figures and garlands, are surmounted with modified Corinthian capitals that

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support an interrupted frieze of colder feeling. The bronze hardware is noticeably fine.

The Flemish influence which grew so prominent in a period of the seventeenth century, first began to be felt in the last three or four decades of the sixteenth century, especially at Florence, during the reigns of Cosimo I and his



FIG. 278. CARVED WOOD TABLE. TUSCAN OR UMBRIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SALVADORI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

successors Francis and Ferdinand. Cosimo I encouraged the coming of Flemish craftsmen when he established the tapestry industry, while the works of Flemish painters were already in great demand, many residing in Italy about this time. Numerous portraits of the later Medici were painted by the Flemish master, Sustermann.

In Figure 226 especially noticeable is a Flemish feeling in the applied turned ornaments, dropping pendant-like from the equally Flemish motif placed at the top of the fluted pilaster, both motifs introduced at the time that the tapering pilasters became popular. Another noticeable practice of this period



FIG 279. CARVED WOOD TABLE. FLORENTINE, LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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is to raise pilasters on pedestals incorporated into a higher form of base in the manner illustrated in this figure. Though the composition of the whole is similar to those of the preceding period, there is a tendency toward a taller form in cabinets of this type, while the introduction of moulded and panelled drawers in the base between the pedestals of the pilasters is an innovation. The wide moulds of the doors inclose raised panels, in the centre of which are bronze handles almost identical with those of Figure 225. The modillions of the frieze and the use of pilasters on the ends sum up the characteristics of the period. Figure 227 also has tapering shafts as well as drawers enriched with a typical Tuscan ornamentation, these incised lozenge forms ornamenting the door panels appearing frequently in work of this period. It is doubtful whether the base is an accurate restoration as the bottom mould appears too heavy. Perhaps in the original the tapering pilasters rested on pedestals, interrupting the moulds, in the manner of the succeeding illustration.



FIG. 280. CARVED WOOD TABLE. LIGURIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

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The Florentine cabinet in Figure 228 bears a close resemblance to the large cabinet in Figure 226. The way in which the pedestals of the pilasters have been incorporated into the base and the way the lower base moulds have been broken through only on the outside of the end pilasters exhibit the refinement sometimes seen in Tuscan work after 1550. The tapering pilasters are partly fluted and astragalled, and partly ornamented with applied ornaments of Flemish character, while the whole is crowned with Ionic capitals. Above the doors, framed with wide stiles and delicate receding moulds, is the frieze composed of two drawers with raised panel work, alternating with small square bevelled panels. The sides of the body are simply panelled and the top is more heavily and richly moulded than in earlier work.

Figure 229 shows how the effect of wider stiles or moulds was often obtained by applying a mould within another and shows as well a variety of tapering pilasters and modillions. The base appears inadequate and undoubtedly has suffered through decay and equal misfortune in restoration.

Practically a grammar of ornament and cabinet architecture of the period is shown in the "Armadio," coming from the Sacristy of Santo Spirito at Florence (Figure 230). Like that of earlier times the ecclesiastical work of the period is a reliable and illuminative source of study where the prevailing motifs of the period are generally expressed in their highest form. The lower body of the example under discussion has features seen in several foregoing credenze with a slight variation as to arrangement, such as the tapering pilasters arranged in pairs and the frieze composed of a series of numerous modillions. The double panelled doors are framed with wide stiles and projecting moulds. The upper part is rife with the more abstract ornament of the period and the baroque manifests itself in the disturbed lines of the pediment, the way the head of the arch is carried up through the space where the entablature and frieze are expected, and in the disturbed curved lines of the brackets placed on either side at the top.

Many tall cabinets, designed in two bodies, have their origin in this period, those coming from Liguria being especially notable and numerous. Illustrated in Figure 231 is one from this province with all the prevailing

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motifs, bearing a close resemblance to many of the French examples that were contemporary with it. It has, like many French models, an upper and a lower body designed in the same manner, each having two doors divided and flanked by pilasters. Rarely are cabinets found from other Italian provinces with a narrower and more vertical upper section, proportions that are distinguishing characteristics of the French ones.



FIG. 281. TABLE. LOMBARD OR VENETIAN, MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN

Succeeding Figure 242 is a Tuscan interpretation of the tall cabinet. The lower part is in the form of the earlier writing cabinet shown in Figure 138, but the latter example is of a more consistent design, the wider moulds of the doors being more in accordance with the carved console brackets of Vasarian character that support the fluted and astragalled frieze containing drawers with bronze handles of elaborate design. The upper body is divided into two parts, each having doors with extremely wide stiles and projecting moulds. These are



FIG. 282. CARVED WOOD TABLE. UMBRIAN, MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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flanked by narrow, vertical, sunken and moulded panels while the frieze contains two panelled drawers separated and flanked by small square panels placed directly over those narrow vertical ones, separating and flanking the doors.

Figure 233 is an elaboration of the credenza designs seen in Figures 228 and 229. The base has been raised considerably and carved brackets with swags substitute the more refined pedestals of Figure 228. The double doors, as



FIG. 283. TABLE END. TUSCAN, ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SALVADORI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

well as the drawer placed directly over them in the frieze, show a more elaborate interpretation of a Tuscan motif that is also seen in contemporary Venetian work. Figure 235 is an ornate example highly characteristic of Lombardy and adjacent Liguria. The unusual spacing of the doors and various drawers is occasionally seen in examples coming from these provinces. The base mould is less pronounced than those of the same character employed in more southern provinces, while the ornamentation of the whole and the bracketed feet are typical of the finer examples of the few surviving Lombard pieces dating about 1540-60.

It is between the years 1550-70 that the type of grotesque caryatid or pilaster decoration, carved with the human figure, had its greatest vogue. It succeeded the High Renaissance pilaster and those narrow vertical panels carved, painted, or inlaid with delicate arabesques, vase forms and playful grotesques, in the Raphaelesque manner. These were succeeded later by pilasters both panelled and fluted, that tapered toward the base. The caryatid is especially noticeable in credenza designs, although it appears constantly in ecclesiastical work. It is prominent in the frieze of the famous choir stalls of the Siena Cathedral, done by Bartolommeo Neroni between the years 1567-1570, in the more exaggerated designs that Ambrogio Santagostino did for the choir stalls of

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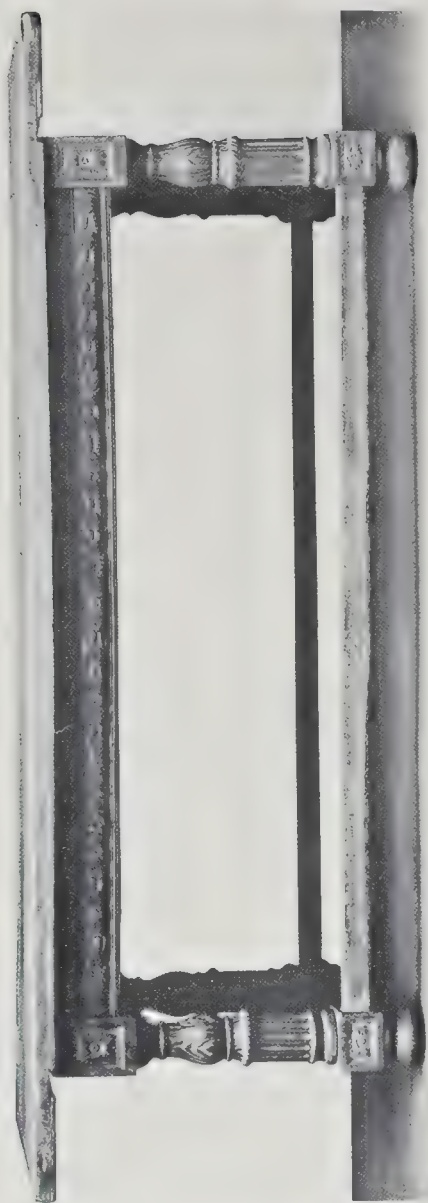


FIG. 284. CARVED WOOD TABLE. ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

the church of San Vittori al Corpo at Milan about 1583 and in numerous other instances that all date after the middle of the century.

In Figure 237 pilaster decorations of this character appear on a credenza associated with a bold base mould carved with a kind of fluting and raised on lion feet. These features, as well as the doors with carved moulds without stiles, are often seen in the work of this period. The centre door is ornamented with a vigorous cartouche motif, the drawers of the frieze are boldly fluted and separated by equally prominent brackets carved with a leaf, the whole being consistently scaled. In the credenza just preceding, a coarser and later type of grotesque appears with other features of contemporary character. Though of doubtful authenticity, the design, which is of a representative character, is worthy of study. The base has been heightened to accommodate the pedestals on

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which rest the grotesques ending in brackets. These flank doors with wide moulds and raised panels embellished with a conventional pattern of inlay, characteristic of the sparingly used wood intarsia of this period. Brackets of Late Renaissance style separate the panelled drawers of the frieze in the usual fashion. In Figure 234, a type of grotesque is combined with heads and pendants of leaves and fruit forming panel decorations. Figures of equally bold modelling fill the end panels, while aggressive mask heads combined with other motifs completely fill the panels of the doors. Practically every part of the moulds, with the exception of those framing the side panels, is sumptuously carved in this over-decorated example.

Figure 239 is one of the finest examples of these credenze excessively carved with the debased ornamentation of the period, the general arrangement of the whole being of the



FIG. 285. TABLE. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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usual order. The pilaster decorations, though coarsely conceived, are finely modelled. They separate and flank doors with panels filled with foliated scrolls, in which are centred grotesque heads, the whole being framed by wide moulds richly ornamented. Moulded and carved, the base is raised on grotesque feet, while in the centre of the base is a pendant-like decoration of the same character.



FIG. 286. CARVED WOOD TABLE. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

Directly over the pilaster carvings are equally coarse and aggressive heads, separating drawers with leaf and grotesque motifs. To the top has been applied a carved mould.

Grotesque caryatid pilasters of exaggerated scale and coarseness, combined with exuberantly carved moulds and aggressive elliptical panel decorations on the doors, appear in Figure 240. The top is more heavily moulded than usual because the drawers and frieze are omitted, and the base rests on figures of lions instead of the more common feet. In Figure 238 canted corners vary the form of a credenza, embellished with grotesques of more pleasing scale. About

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this time the credenza of rectangular form began to give way to those with canted and rounded corners, developing into even more complicated structures in the following century.

Tall vertical writing cabinets in two sections were in vogue at this time. Excellent spacing and a subordinate use of baroque ornamentation in Figure



FIG 287. CARVED WOOD TABLE. NORTH ITALIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

242 again illustrate the supremacy of the Florentine designer. The upper body with its fall front missing is spaced with numerous and variously shaped drawers that recalls the work of about 1500, while the projecting moulds of the whole, with their unusually delicate profiles, are not found before this period. The caryatids, crowned with Ionic capitals, and the broken base and entablature all point to a school of cabinet design after 1550.

Illustrated in Figure 243 is another type of the tall writing cabinet often met with in the second half of the sixteenth century. The lower body with moulded base, resting on figures of grotesque animals, has doors panelled with

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FIG. 288. TABLE. BOLOGNESE, LATE XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF CHAS. A. PLATT, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

arched tops. At the corners are placed female figures standing on brackets, composed of a leaf in high relief. In the frieze directly over the doors is a long drawer with a guilloche decoration and bronze handles. The drawer is flanked with grotesque heads. The upper body with stile decorations

composed of tier upon tier of figures coarsely carved in the round, has a fall front which reveals an interior fitted with various drawers and secret compartments. The sides of the upper body are filled with an arch-headed panel, flanked with sculptured stiles like those of the front. The inner cabinet revealed by a fall front displays an elaborate architectural scheme with sculpture and broken pediments.

It is quite evident that the upper sections of these cabinets were sometimes made to be placed on cabinets or tablets of independent design, as a large number of these, designed in the same style, survive without a lower body. Those seen in Figures 244 and 245 are placed on cabinets of the same period that were not designed as a part of them. The exteriors of both show little change from those of the preceding illustrations, while the interiors reveal a variety of elaborate baroque architectural schemes. Though of the last decades of the period, the cabinets on which they rest are excellent specimens of the cabinet-maker's art, especially Figure 244 which appears to be in its original condition, with an unusually slight restoration. The lowest member of the base is, however, doubtful as to origin and correctness of design. The arrangement of the columns in the re-entering angles of the corners recalls the fine Medici credenza shown in Figure 217, while the tapering shafts and their ornamentation, the way in which the pedestals break the lines of the base, as well as the arrangement of the modillions in the frieze containing the drawers, are familiar

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features met with in all representative design of this epoch. The lower body of Figure 245 is of similar design. The base undisturbed with pilaster pedestals and raised on lion feet, has a heavily moulded base member, as often seen carved with a gadrooning in the design of earlier credenze. Carved decorations, composed of a cartouche motif with swags and over-lapping disc ornaments, fill the tapering shaft.

In Figure 246 a more elaborate and later interior scheme is shown, while

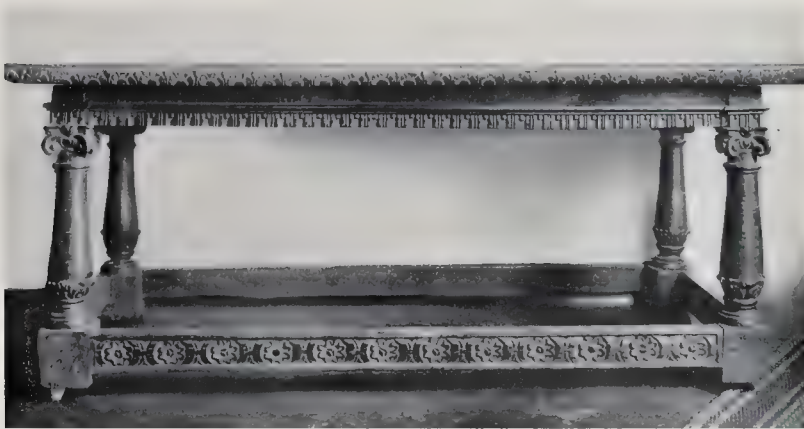


FIG. 289. CARVED WOOD TABLE. UMBRIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SALVADORI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

Figure 248 shows a slight variation of Figure 243 and has its fall front and arch-headed door panels veneered with burr walnut in the manner of many cabinets of this type. Figure 249 is Lombard or Ligurian work. It without doubt had a fall front and perhaps rested on an enclosed lower body ornamented in a manner harmonious with it.

As the century advanced the demand increased for the tall cabinet; toward its close a change took place in construction, the lower part becoming a stand on which the elaborate cabinet of the upper part rested. On these articles of furniture the craftsman and designer displayed their most marvellous technique and elaborate decorative schemes. Exotic woods soon became insufficient to satisfy the ever-growing luxurious taste, so inlays of semi-

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precious stones such as agate, lapis lazuli, and porphyry, besides bronze, tortoiseshell, crystal, ivory, and mother of pearl were used to enrich these cabinets of ebony and walnut. Many of these were produced at Florence in the second half of the sixteenth century for the Medici palaces, besides those supplied by the Italian designer for the aristocratic houses of Europe, especially those of France where, from the reign of Henry III, they were highly prized.¹ Several cabinets of this description are now in the Pitti Palace at Florence, while one supposed to have belonged to Maria Gonzaga, Queen of Poland—is at Paris in the Cluny Museum. Beds as well as cabinets were evidently ornamented in this excessive manner. John Evelyn saw in a nobleman's palace at Padua a very ingenious cabinet "set thick with achats, turquoises, and other precious stones, in the midst of which was an antiq of a dog in stone scratching his eare,

¹Andrea Saglio, in his "French Furniture," says: "The use of bronze in the ornamentation of French furniture, of which so many examples exist, was without doubt suggested by the delightful combinations of gold and silver designed by cabinet makers on the other side of the Alps. The use of tortoise-shell plaques, in which the Boulles excelled, was evidently suggested by the mosaics which Florentine artists began in the middle of the sixteenth century to work into their little cabinets and the tops of their tables."

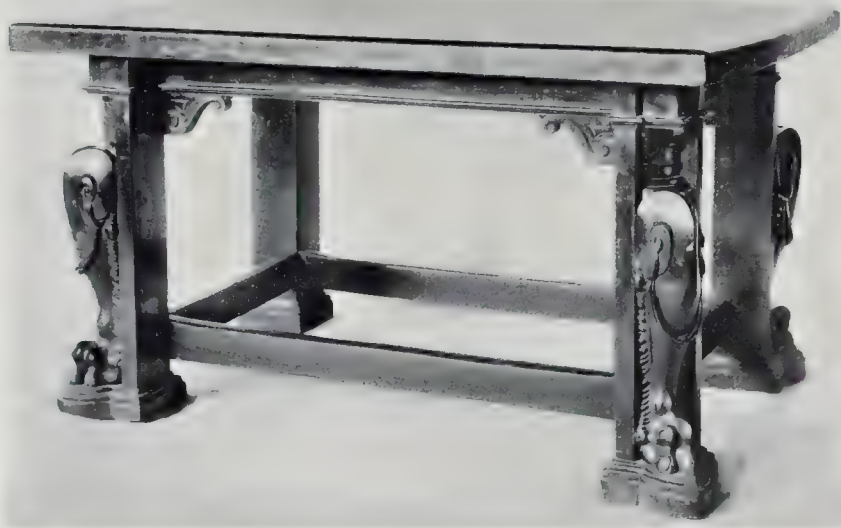


FIG. 290. CARVED WOOD TABLE. TUSCAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PAYNE WHITNEY, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

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very rarely cut, and comparable to the greatest curiositie I have ever seene of that kind for y^e accuratenesse of y^e worke." He speaks of an adjoining chamber in this palace with a "bedstead all inlaid with achats, chrystals, cornelians, lazuli, &c., esteemed worth 16,000 crownes."



FIG. 291. TABLE. ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

In addition to cabinets, we hear of tables designed in this sumptuous manner. Vasari, speaking of particular pieces of his day, mentions a "splendid library table" made for Francesco de' Medici. It was constructed of ebony with columns of eliotrope, oriental jasper, and lapis lazuli, having bases and capitals of chased silver. It was further enriched with ornaments of silver and

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little figures interspersed with miniatures and terminals of silver and gold in full relief. Tables constructed of stone and alabaster were occasionally inlaid with precious stones. In addition to those in the palace of the Duke of Mantua mentioned by Lassels we learn that Bernardino di Porfirio, a renowned Florentine master of this art, produced tables in the same style for the Medici dukes. Bernardino executed, after a design of Vasari's, a table wholly formed of oriental alabaster inlaid with carnelian, jasper, and lapis lazuli; even jewels were added to its embellishments and Vasari claims that it was valued at twenty thousand crowns.

The earliest chest of drawers that may be called the prototype of a *commode*, seems to have made its appearance during the vogue of the tall writing cabinets described in the preceding illustrations. The only Renaissance examples we have date from the last decade of the sixteenth century and show a similar decorative treatment. Figure 250 rests on a base with variously carved moulds on which rest the stile decorations of the front and sides. These are composed of figures carved in the round and arranged tier upon tier in the manner of those seen on the writing cabinets. The drawers, divided by heavily carved horizontal members, are framed with carved moulds and have handles composed of grotesque figures carved in wood. The top section is divided into two drawers, between them a panel decorated with figures in unusually high relief. In chests of this kind surfaces of the drawers were often veneered while the edges of tops were invariably carved and moulded. The next example (Figure 251) varies only in its decorative detail, the general form and arrangement of drawers being identical. Though Figure 252 has the same general arrangement, variety is shown in its stile decorations, the carved moulds, and the raising of the whole on lion feet.

The ecclesiastical work of the Late Renaissance is rich and prolific, and the student will find it a valuable and reliable source of study,—a veritable encyclopedia of the ornament of this period. Two fine *leggi*, seen in Figures 253 and 254, reproduce many design characteristics of the finest quality that have been analyzed in foregoing illustrations.

Though the *cassone* became less prominent in the furnishings of the house

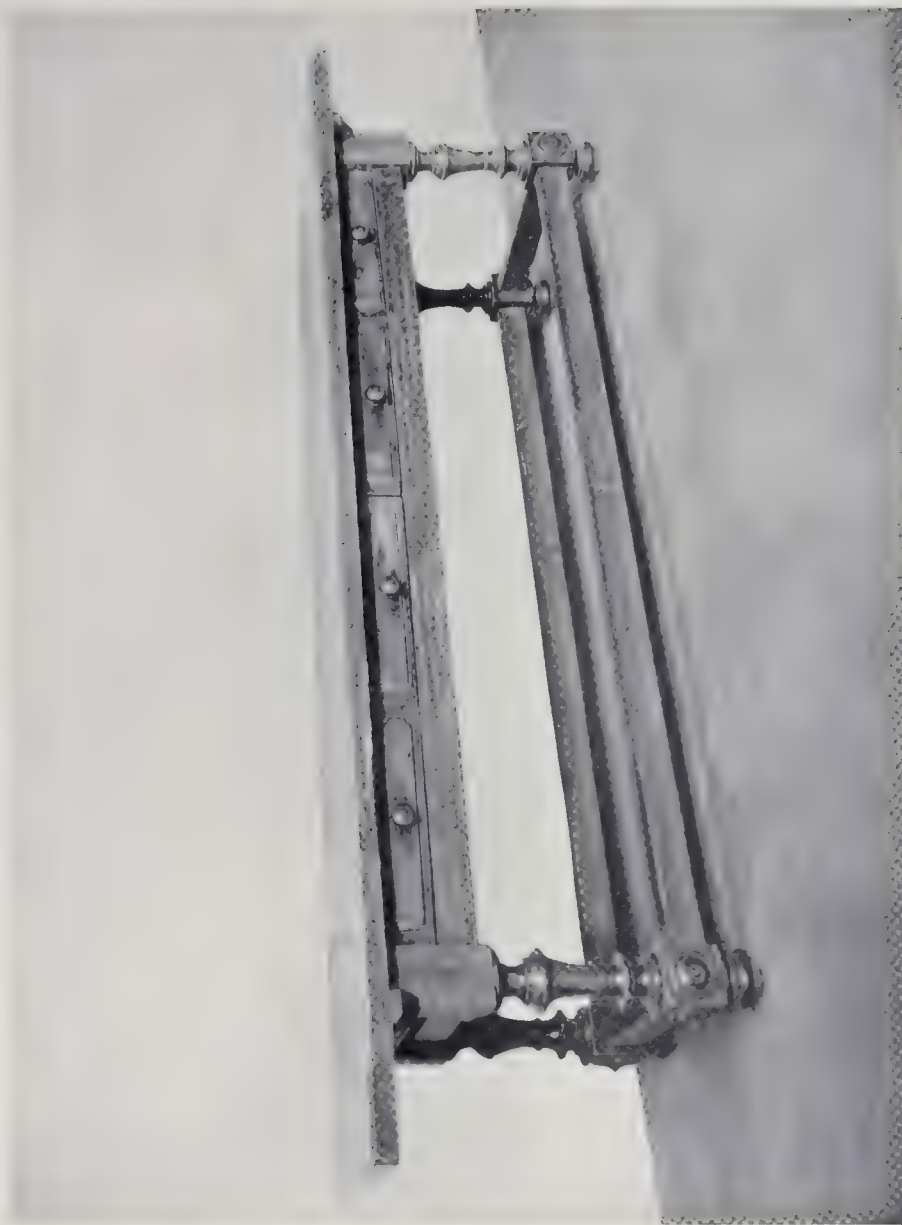


FIG. 292. TABLE. BOLOGNESE, END OF THE XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF MESSRS TRENCH & CO, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 293. PEDESTAL TABLE. LUCCA, END OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 294. PEDESTAL TABLE. ABOUT 1600
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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FIG. 295. PEDESTAL TABLE. LATE XVI
CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PAYNE WHITNEY, ESQ.,
NEW YORK CITY

as other forms of household furniture became more varied and comfortable, it persisted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in elaborate form. In former periods it was the principal receptacle for the storage of various household articles, but with the advent of the credenza, the cabinets in two bodies, and the chest of drawers, the demand for it grew gradually less. The sarcophagus form was retained throughout this period and just after the middle of the century began to display the same design tendencies seen in the credenza and other forms of the cabinet.

Figure 256 is the earliest of the following examples, dating about the middle of the century. The form rests on lion feet, between which is arranged a base outlined with baroque curves, while the front panel is divided into sections containing carved panels depicting classical subjects, such as are seen in those of earlier work. At the corners and separating the panels are coarse figures ending in tapering shafts that are prominent in later design. Placed in the centre panel are the arms supported by putti, while the moulds of the domed top are carved with a leaf decoration. Figure 257, of a few years later date and somewhat restored, shows fluted and astragalled pilasters that taper toward the lion feet, dividing panels elaborately carved with grotesques and foliated scrolls, the centre panel again showing putti flanking the coat of arms. The interrupted frieze is carved with a motif seen often in decoration between the years 1550-70, the top is ornamented with a debased use of the leaf, and the decoration of the whole is partly gilded.

Of unquestioned authenticity is the rectangular cassone dating about 1550-60, shown in Figure 258. On carved bases of complicated forms stand



FIG. 296. CENTRE TABLE. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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FIG. 297. PEDESTAL TABLE. LATE XVI
CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

Atlantes carved in the round, flanking the long rectangular panel of the front. This is framed with a prominent mould carved with fruit, while the moulds of the base and the edge of the top also are richly carved. The ends are simply panelled and have wrought-iron handles. Though not belonging to this example, the stand on which chests of this type were often raised is highly interesting because few original ones are to be found.

In Figures 262, 263, 264, and 265 are shown modifications of the rectangular form, coming from Venetia.

Though the sarcophagus form is occasionally met with from this and adjacent provinces the rectangular shape was commonly used. Figure 262, though dating about 1550 or later, is representative of the carved wood Venetian chest after Sansovino's arrival and has a front panel carved with a type of decoration—formed of an ellipse and rectangles with additions of grotesque heads and scrolls—that is sometimes distinguished by that master's name. The spacing of the front into one long panel flanked by two vertical projecting ones—around which break the base and cornice moulds—is typical of these designs. Though the boldly modelled base is employed it is less pronounced and less often carved with gadrooning, while feet composed of scrolls are preferred to lion feet. Chests of this type were often supplied with cushions richly covered, making them more comfortable as seats. The composition of the cassone illustrated in Figure 263 has been varied with two panels separated and flanked by projecting ones carved with grotesque mask-heads and scrolls of Venetian Late Renaissance character, around which break the carved moulds of the base. The lion feet appear to be an inaccurate restoration, the original ones being, without doubt,



FIG. 298. CENTRE TABLE. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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in the form of those in the accompanying illustrations. It is also doubtful whether the undecorated panels are original, as the elaborate moulds suggest frames for more decorative ones. Those following in Figures 264 and 265 are excellent examples of the Venetian chests of the Late Renaissance. Of identical arrangement, they are embellished with representative Venetian designs.



FIG. 299. TABLE. UMBRIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

Two higher forms of more architectural design are shown in Figures 266 and 267. Of these the former has a simply moulded base resting on frankly restored feet supporting a front spaced into three sections by tapering pilasters. The central division contains a baroque architectural feature, which—like the divisions on either side, with arched tops—is completely covered with a fine surface decoration composed of grotesque heads and scrolls. The hinged top and the sides are spaced with simply moulded panels. Illustrated in Figure 267 is a Venetian cassone from the Museo Civico at Milan displaying a more ambitious architectural scheme influenced by the Palladian school. Though the lowest

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member of the base is of doubtful origin, the base in which the pedestals of the columns have been incorporated is authentic and is embellished with intarsia of the period. Especially characteristic is the pattern ornamenting the pedestal bases and the interrupted frieze of the crowning cornice, a design derived from the elaborate semi-precious stone and marble inlay work with which cabinets



FIG. 300. TABLE. UMBRIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

constructed of ebony and other fine woods were sometimes embellished. Doric columns space the front into three divisions, the centre with a rusticated arch filled with intarsia showing architecture in perspective, while that on either side, with more complicated architecture, is embellished in a similar manner. Between the columns are niches that in the more elaborate examples often contained figures of carved wood, ivory, or bronze. The ends holding the wrought-iron handles are simply treated with an arch-headed panel.

The cassapanca was still prominent in the Tuscan living apartment of the period, and its large form afforded the designer an opportunity to display his

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more daring and ornamental schemes. One of the finest examples of the period, shown in Figure 268, has been attributed to Gian Bologna and is a design worthy of that celebrated master, though of baroque form and ornamentation. After Michelangelo designed the Medici tombs, it became the ambition of every master and artisan to have reclining figures on the pediments of his



FIG. 301. CENTRE TABLE. BOLOGNESE, LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE DAVANZATI PALACE COLLECTION, FLORENCE

furniture as well as on the pediments of architecture. In this example the moulded cornice of the back is surmounted by a pediment composed of volutes on which recline two nude figures of bronze-like beauty holding a swag of drapery, while a pedestal placed between the figures supports a vase form showing the arms of the Orsini family. The chest-like seat with curved sides and front raised on a finely proportioned dais with rounded corners, has scroll-shaped arms placed directly over the mask heads, forming a kind of pilaster decoration around which break the moulds of the base and cornice. A fine patina and beautifully coloured walnut, combined with harmonious



FIG. 302. CENTRE TABLE. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 303. CARVED WOOD CENTRE TABLE. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF PAYNE WHITNEY, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 304. TRESTLE TABLE. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 305. TRESTLE TABLE. LATE XVI CENTURY

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lines and proportions enhanced by the excellence of its sculpture, give to this piece an unusual rarity.¹

Less successful is the design illustrated in Figure 270. The seat, raised on a dais with a carved mould, has a sarcophagus-like front carved with a vigorous decoration composed of swags and foliated scrolls placed on either side of a winged grotesque head, in addition to a band of scroll-like decoration placed just below the hinged top of the chest. Curved-form arms, carved with winged heads of exceptional fine sculptural quality rest on panelled pedestals with grotesque heads that flank the sarcophagus-like front. The carved back is surmounted with an elaborate ornamental cresting displaying putti of excellent modelling flanking the arms of the Medici, undoubtedly those of Cosimo I, as the crown and the baroque character of the whole suggest.² As in most cases, the superb quality of the walnut and its beautiful patina give to these pieces a distinguishing quality that is lost in photographic reproduction. Before its acquisition by the Duveen Brothers, this cassapanca had the distinction of being included in two famous collections, those of M. Jules Poges and Sig. Cav. Stefano Bardini.

Figure 272 of a date contemporary with the preceding is of similar form without the crowning decoration at the back. Though equally coarse and vigorous, its decadent ornamentation is more successfully applied. A cassapanca from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 271) shows more restraint in the application of its baroque ornamentation, as does the example varied with curved forms, illustrated in Figure 269.

Many monumental tables of this period were still constructed with tops resting on ends braced with ornamental stretchers. Though Figure 274 has the stretcher secured with wooden pins in a primitive manner, the disturbed curves of the end supports, formed of reversed volutes ending in lion feet, as well as the form of the stretcher, clearly indicate a date after 1550. Figure 275 displays all the characteristic motifs of the period incorporated in the end-

¹This is one of the pieces that were retained by the Italian Government after they had been catalogued for the sale of the Davanzati Palace Collection, which took place at the American Art Galleries in the autumn of 1916.

²A crown of the same design is seen in the portrait of Cosimo I, by Bronzino. As Cosimo was the first duke of Tuscany, the crown would not be found associated with the Medici arms before his rule.

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support of a table. The reverse curves of the brackets that outline the ends, the tapering pilasters on which rest parts of human figures supporting Ionic

capitals, the interrupted base moulds, and the over-lapping disk decorations of the pilasters, are all favourite motifs with the Late Renaissance designer.

Throughout the period Venetian design displays more grace and a less frequent use of the unpleasant grotesque as shown in the table (Figure 276) dating about 1550. The design of the ends are based on the cartouche, a motif appearing frequently in design of the Late Renaissance and the seventeenth century. As in many of the finer tables of the mid-century the supporting ends rest on bases outlined with



FIG. 306. CONSOLE TABLE. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

curved forms ending in lion feet. Bracing the ends is a stretcher of baroque character having in its centre a cartouche motif.

The north Italian table, illustrated in Figure 277, showing the influence of Ligurian structure, has two draw leaves laid on an apron that is inlaid with

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lozenge forms of lighter woods. These are separated by carved modillion-shaped brackets and from the corners of the apron are suspended turned pendants. Elaborate supporting ends of indefinite form have braced between



FIG. 307. WALL TABLE. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

them at the base a stretcher carved with panels of guilloche ornament. On this rest the turned members which seem to support the top. This figure together with the one that follows it are two of the most ornate types of the Decadent period. Figure 278 has in its apron numerous drawers each carved with a panel decoration, a Tuscan motif prevailing during the rule of Cosimo I and that of his successor. The heavy mould carved with a modified gadrooning

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placed just beneath the drawers, together with the excessively ornamented drawers and top, gives an appearance of heaviness that is seen in the more elaborate tables dating after the middle of the century. Baroque volutes, and a debased use of the shell, form the ends, which terminate in grotesque animal feet. Though much of the ornamentation of this table is common to Tuscany, the heaviness of the whole and its general proportions suggest Umbrian design, in spite of its elaborate character.

Illustrated in Figure 279 is one of the earlier examples of these tables with pierced ends. Voluted scrolls outlining ends of lyre form enclose scrolls and a fleur-de-lis to which the square-moulded stretcher is secured with keyed jaws. Rarely are authentic tables of this style found dating from this period, they generally being of the florid seventeenth century Spanish type with braces of wrought iron.

Liguria and her principal centre, Genoa, produced a type of table shown in Figure 280 that varies little in its design. Liguria has, not unjustly, been accused of a lack of artistic imagination. Rich and prosperous, she pursued her arts as she did her trades: her painters, like her shop keepers, carrying on their traditions for generations. Four generations of the Baroni, five of the Orsoloni, and as many as seven of the Calvi, painted her pictures. An equal lack of originality was displayed in sculpture, while none of her great architects was native born. Only a slight difference is seen between the table of Figure 280 and that shown in Figure 155, of only a few years earlier date. The structural form is identical and the decorations similar, with the exception of the intertwining vine motif, carved on the end columns of the former, which gives it an appearance of slightly later character.

The beautiful Umbrian table designed about 1550-60, illustrated in Figure 281, disarms the critic who condemns as a whole the work of this period. Though the console brackets composing its ends are of typical baroque form, the fine proportion of the whole and the simplicity of its beautiful lines give an effect of dignity that is met with in Palladio's best work. Both this example and the one following, with carved and voluted ends and simply moulded top, are excellent illustrations of a type without stretchers, inspired by the designs of



FIG. 308. CARVED WOOD ARM CHAIR. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

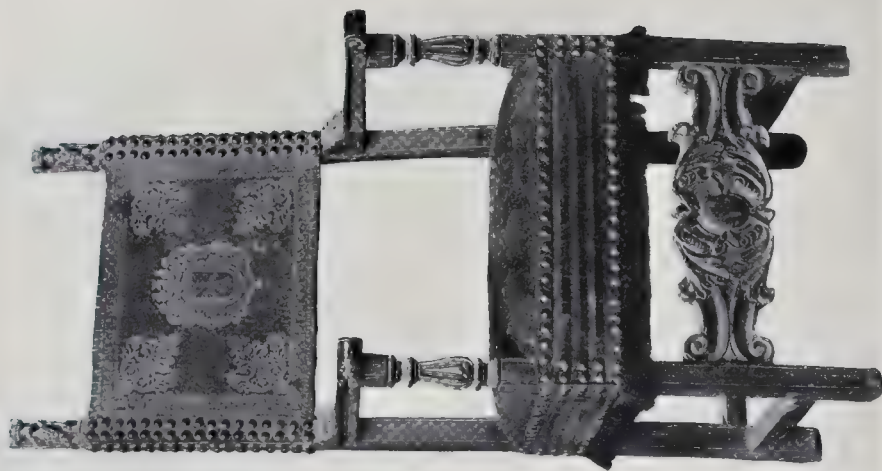


FIG. 309. ARM CHAIR. FLORENTINE, SECOND HALF XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 310. ARM CHAIR. LATTER PART OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

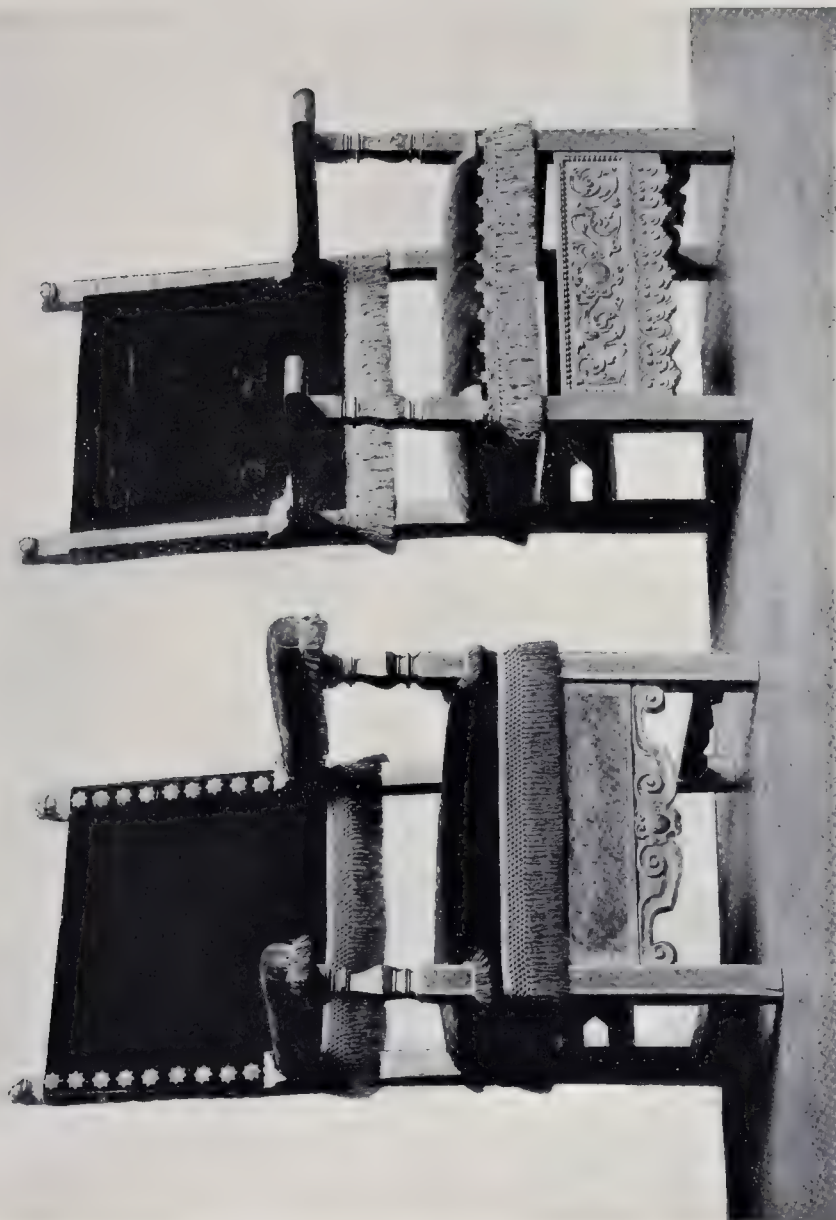


FIG. 311. ARM CHAIR UPHOLSTERED IN VELVET.
OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

FIG. 312. ARM CHAIR UPHOLSTERED IN VELVET. NORTH ITALIAN,
SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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antique stone models. Figure 281, perhaps from Lombardy, has ends showing a more elaborate interpretation of the forms seen in Figure 282. The ends rest on bases outlined with scrolls terminating in lion feet, instead of the more architectural forms of the preceding, while the space between the volutes of the ends are carved with a fleur-de-lis motif. To the top has been applied a mould with a simple carving.

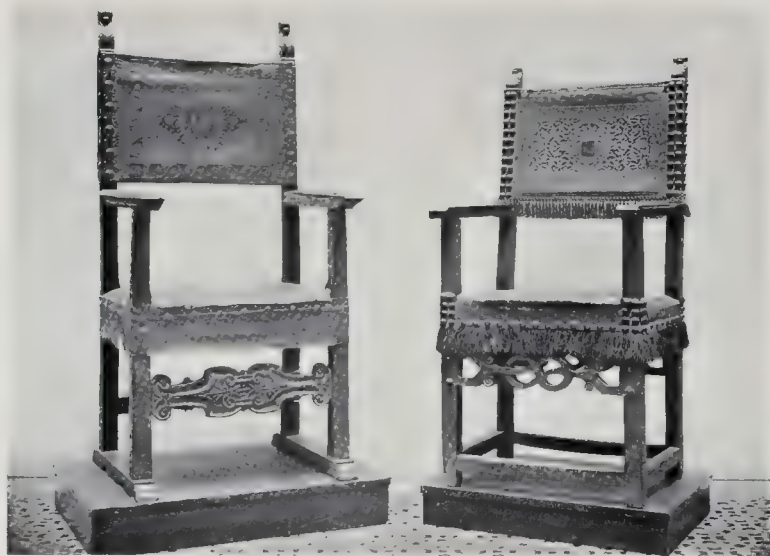


FIG. 313. ARM CHAIRS WITH LEATHER BACKS AND SEATS. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY

FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

Though the rectangular table with four turned supports connected by simple stretchers placed near their base had been occasionally used in the former period, before the century closed it had practically supplanted the table constructed on solid ends. Of the larger types Figures 284 and 285 are of the highest order, the former with its partly fluted and turned supports and richly carved apron being of slightly earlier date. The latter has—nicely subordinated to its structure—turned supports, applied circular ornaments, and voluted brackets that can be recalled in many foregoing illustrations of furniture of this period.

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Figure 286 is a shorter form and is contemporary with the preceding example. The bulbous turning of the legs is modified while the circular ornaments appear again; the drawers are moulded and, together with the ends of the apron, have convex panels carved with a guilloche decoration, these being separated by brackets showing a debased use of the inverted leaf. The thin moulded top is not in scale with the other features.

Northern work, during the phase of excessive ornamentation, though



FIG. 314. ARM CHAIR. LOMBARD, LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE MUSEO CIVICO, MILAN



FIG. 315. ARM CHAIR. UMBRIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF H. H. ROGERS, ESQ., NEW YORK CITY

often crude, shows a lighter interpretation. This is illustrated in the profusely ornamented table in Figure 287, where the carved turned legs are less bulbous and retain some of the delicacy of former work. The drawers are carved with a then-prevailing oblong motif showing northern interpretation. To the top has been added an elaborately carved ornamentation, circular ornaments are prominent at the joinings, and the stretchers are carved with a fluting.

Tables of this style are often

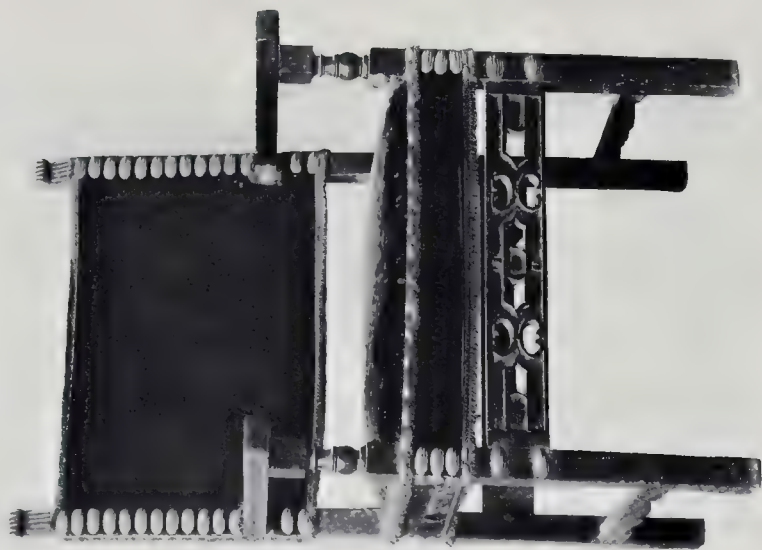


FIG. 316. ARM CHAIR. LIGURIAN
FROM THE COLLECTION OF R. VON MÜLLER, BERLIN

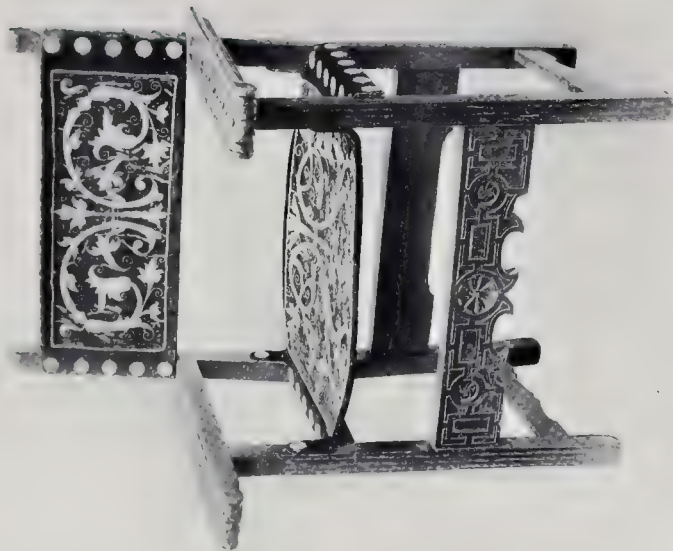


FIG. 317. ARM CHAIR. LIGURIAN, ABOUT 1600
COURTESY OF MESSRS. P. W. FRINCH & CO., NEW YORK CITY

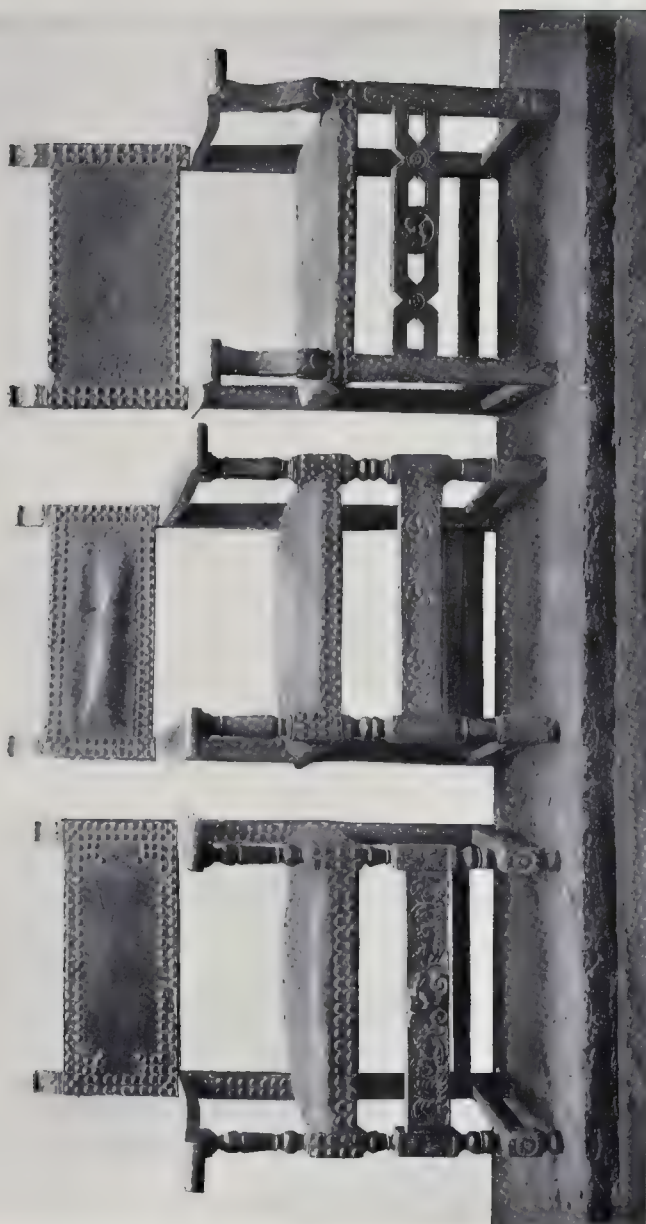


FIG. 318. ARM CHAIR. LIGURIAN
LATE XVI CENTURY

FIG. 319. ARM CHAIR. LIGURIAN
LATE XVI CENTURY

FIG. 320. ARM CHAIR. LIGURIAN
LATE XVI CENTURY

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FIG. 321. CARVED WOOD SIDE CHAIR
BRESCIAN, SECOND HALF OF
THE XVI CENTURY



FIG. 322. SIDE CHAIR. VENETIAN, LATE
XVI CENTURY

FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

constructed with square legs, caryatids and other varieties of support as seen in the four illustrations following. Figure 289 is one of the coarser decorative types, perhaps from Umbria, with turned supports that are carved near the base with a leaf decoration and surmounted with an Ionic capital. These sup-

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ports are braced with coarsely ornamented stretchers. The top, with a carved edge, rests on an apron with a decorated member. The design of the following table, formerly in the Davanzati Palace collection, has been attributed to Vasari. Of exceptional thickness, the top is supported on legs of unusual design formed of consoles ending in lion feet that have been placed in the re-entering angles of square supports; around these the moulded apron of the table breaks. Figure 290, one of the numerous tables of this character belonging to the second half of the sixteenth century, came from the vicinity of Bologna. Supports, invariably square, rarely carved, but often decorated with inlay, were connected with simple stretchers, sometimes with a mould applied in the manner shown. In the angle under the apron contain-



FIG. 323. ARM CHAIR. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

ing the panelled drawers with wooden knobs, brackets are generally found and in many examples they are seen placed where the stretcher joins the legs. Whether plain or with applied fluted mould, the tops have an appearance of unusual thickness. The brackets separating the drawers are characteristic.

Rarely are tables of the quality of Figure 291 found in this unrestored state.

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Of unusual proportion, it is supported on grotesque Atlantes between whose bases an ornamental stretcher is placed. The moulded and carved top rests on an apron spaced with voluted brackets between which are compartments with doors; this apron, in turn, is supported by a moulded cornice that rests on the carved figures.

Many fine authentic tables like the one shown in the following illustration



FIG. 324. SIDE CHAIR. SECOND
HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY



FIG. 325. SIDE CHAIR. BRESCIAN,
LATE XVI CENTURY

FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

(Figure 292) come into the market to-day. They date from the last decades of the sixteenth and beginning years of the seventeenth century and are peculiar to Bologna and its vicinity. Distinguished by their fine colour, they vary but slightly in design, being invariably supported by turned legs of this character and having plain stretchers and thick handsome tops. They vary in the decorative treatment of the drawers, which are sometimes moulded, and sometimes have raised panels showing the rounded corners that became popular about this time. The applied circular ornaments on the bases of the supports continued to be in vogue, while the prominent knobs of drawers were often of brass or of bronze.

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Many pedestal tables and other smaller ones having their origin toward the end of this period, give indication of more numerous and comfortable furnishings. They are more often found with hexagonal tops, supported on variously turned shafts showing equally varied bases. Figure 293 has an eight-sided top with carved edges and rests on a turned member with a rectangular



FIG. 326. SIDE CHAIR. LATE
XVI CENTURY



FIG. 327. SIDE CHAIR. LATE
XVI CENTURY

FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

moulded base, while the following table has an undecorated top of the same form supported by a more complicated pedestal that rests on a three-cornered carved base raised with lion feet.

Figures 295 and 297 are elaborated examples of the same type with drawers, the former being of fifteen or twenty years earlier date, with a top of eight unequal sides. The deep apron is carved with a kind of guilloche, while the turned pedestal rests on an elaborately moulded eight-sided base that is raised on four lion feet. Figure 299, more profusely ornamented and of later date, has a six-sided top and a deep apron ornamented with elaborate raised panel work. The

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FIG. 328. SGABELLO. MIDDLE OF THE
XVI CENTURY
FROM THE COLLECTION OF CARL W. HAMILTON, ESQ.,
NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 329. SGABELLO. MIDDLE OF THE
XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION,
FLORENCE

carved melon turning rests on a square base surrounded by four radiating baroque brackets.

The magnificent centre table shown in Figure 296 owes much of its decorative value to its fine sweeping lines and the beautiful colour of its walnut. The carved and moulded top, which is about two meters in diameter, rests on a

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central turned support surrounded by three console brackets of curved form. These in turn rest on a moulded three-sided base raised on lion feet.

Centre tables of this period were still constructed, as in the early sixteenth century, with supports formed of consoles and brackets radiating from a central member, but the demand for them gradually grew less as they underwent the transformation that affected all artistic design. Though of cruder form, the original state of Figure 298 makes it an especially valuable and interesting study of these tables which are so representative of those coming from the Marches at this time. The thick undecorated top is supported on scrolls of interrupted lines ending in lion feet which radiate from a round member with a turned pendant. Following this is a richer treatment of the same type of table, while Figure 300 shows a moulded and carved top of hexagonal form and more elaborately carved bracket legs of baroque form.

The three tables succeeding are more characteristic of centre table construction of the late sixteenth century. Of these Figure 301 exhibits a more unusual structure in having crossed stretchers connecting turned supports that rest on square bases. The octagonal top is laid on a deep apron with canted corners and raised panels, while below the apron is applied a sawed-out ornamentation.



FIG. 330. SGABELLO. MIDDLE OF THE
XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

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Figure 302 is constructed in the more usual manner, its round moulded top with an applied sawed-out decoration rests on an apron with elaborate panel work separated and flanked by brackets.

Trestle tables were rarely used in the Late Renaissance, yet a curious specimen of this period is shown in Figure 304. In the lower illustration another table of this character is shown. Each trestle is constructed with sawed-out vase-form ends resting on runners and connected by a central stretcher, in the manner of many smaller tables.

Two wall tables that were evidently used for writing in some monastic interior are seen in Figures 306 and 307. Both are designed in a similar manner, the former having console ends with more disturbed lines and raised panel work. The deep apron has in front two panelled drawers flanked by modillions crudely carved, on which rests a top ornamented with an applied carved mould. The table that follows has carved console brackets of more definite form supporting an apron with two simply panelled drawers and moulded top.



FIG. 331. "SGABELLI." LATE XVI CENTURY

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By the end of the century the chair of rectangular form had become the important arm chair of the palace, practically supplanting the chair of X form. Those of this period have more elaborately ornamented frames and are more richly upholstered in fine stuffs and trimmings. Supporting members are often turned and carved, while the finials crowning the upright structure of the back are more elaborate and prominent. Front stretchers are elaborately ornamented and like the finials are often touched with gold. Most of the chairs of the period

do not rest on runners, but are strengthened by stretchers instead. An unusually fine, though ornate model is shown in Figure 308. The square members supporting the seat are carved near the base, while between them at the front and sides are placed richly decorated stretchers. Wide, flat arms, typical of this period, are supported on equally ornate members. The seat and back are covered with red velvet of the period and are trimmed with braids and fringes.



FIG. 332. STOOL. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 333. CARVED WOOD STOOL. ROMAN
ABOUT 1600
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

In Figure 309 the carved front stretcher is of more vigorous design and contrasts more with the square supports incised with a simple line. The straight, narrower arms, as well as the design of its carved supports and the finials of the back,

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indicate an earlier date than the preceding one. The seat and back are covered with embossed and gilded leather. One of a set of important chairs of this type, with an original covering of high decorative value, is shown in Figure



FIG. 334. ECCLESIASTICAL CHAIR OF IRON AND BRASS. END OF THE XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF MESSRS. P. W. FRENCH & CO., NEW YORK CITY

310. The design is composed of a pattern of red applied on an old gold ground. Rarely are original chairs of this importance found. In most cases, after their restoration, they have been covered with decorative embroidery and other fabrics of ecclesiastical origin. When chairs, especially those of the late sixteenth century, were covered with highly ornamented materials, the up-

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holstery was often brought so deep below the seat that the ornamental stretcher was omitted, as it is in this case. The simple square supports rest on runners ending in lion feet in the manner of earlier chairs, while beneath the moulded



FIG. 335. WROUGHT IRON AND BRASS FOLD-STOOL. DATED 1604
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

arms, on the square members supporting them, are placed voluted brackets of leaf form. The upright structures of the back are topped with carved and gilded finials.

In Figure 311 is shown a model with upholstered arms, rarely found in chairs of this type, although in portraits of the period they are occasionally seen.

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FIG. 336. SEDIA DANTESCA. SECOND HALF OF
THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE ALTMAN COLLECTION, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

In this example as well as in that accompanying it, a carved stretcher is placed below the upholstered seat, the decoration of the latter having the character of late northern work. The arm supports are of similar form as well as the decorations that crown the upright members of the back. The three chairs following, in Figures 313 and 314, are variations of this type in a less monumental form, with seats and backs covered with embossed leather.

One of a set of Umbrian arm chairs follows (Figure 315). The constructional members are square with the exception of the turned arm supports and the front stretcher of an abstract design. The uprights of the back, ending in turned finials, have placed between them a top rail outlined with baroque scrolls and carved with the arms of the Vitelli family, of Citta di Castello. Between this member and a plain horizontal splat are placed little turned spindles. The wooden seat was perhaps at one time supplied with a loose cushion.

Two chairs of a design peculiar to Liguria are shown in Figures 316 and 317. Chairs from this section are more often of broader and lower form, those of the later part of the century having extremely broad arms. The decorative stretcher is generally of more geometrical character, while the finials of the back are simply designed. Another noticeable feature of chairs from this province is the prominence of ornamental nail heads. Of the two illustrated 316 is of earlier date. Its structural members are square and unornamented, excepting the simple turning that supports the arms. The pierced ornamented stretcher, like

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the simply fluted finials, is characteristic of Liguria. Figure 317, showing Spanish influence, is of lower form and has wide, flat, carved arms of later character, while the square fluted front supports hold a stretcher ornamented with an abstract design. The back and seat are covered with velvet appliqué of a foliated scroll pattern, this material being fastened to the frame with nails



FIG. 337. FOLDING CHAIRS. ABOUT 1600
FROM THE MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE

having large ornamental heads. When seats were covered in this unusual manner, leather was more often used because of the greater strength required of the material. Chairs having seats with this type of covering are peculiar to Liguria and are seldom found elsewhere.

The three Ligurian chairs, on the page following, show more variations in their design. The wide and slightly curving arms are especially noticeable, while the members supporting those of Figure 320 are of curved form and together with the front legs are carved with a leaf decoration, giving the chair a close resemblance to some contemporary French models. The decoration of

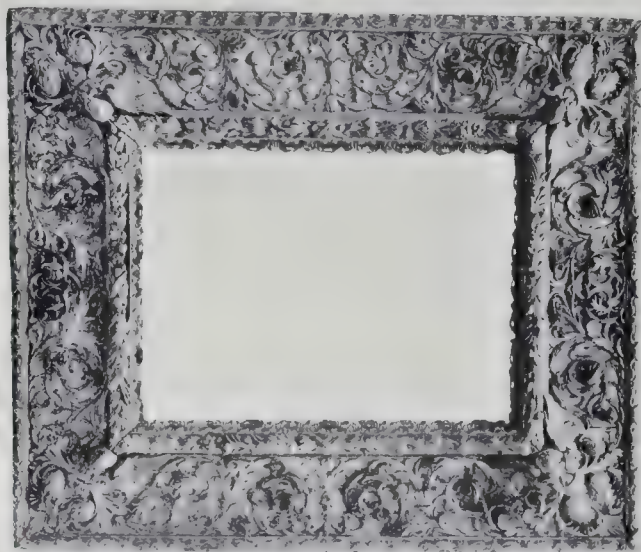


FIG. 338. CARVED WOOD FRAME
END OF THE XVI CENTURY

FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY



FIG. 339. CARVED WOOD FRAME. SECOND HALF
OF THE XVI CENTURY

FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON



FIG. 340. CARVED AND GILDED FRAME. VENETIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

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FIG. 341. MIRROR FRAME. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

the stretcher of Figure 318 recalls that seen on the preceding tables from the same province.

Another type of chair characteristic of the Late Renaissance is the elaborately carved example seen in the succeeding figures. Many side chairs survive in this style, but those with arms are more rarely found. Of the three shown in Figures 321, 322, and 323, the second is of earliest origin, as its simpler structure and panels outlined with less exaggerated curves would suggest. Figure 321 has bands of simple inlay outlining the upright supports which hold

the splats, and stretchers outlined with a series of baroque forms. As in the upholstered type, the upright structures of the back are invariably topped with carved finials, but more rarely do the front legs end in lion feet, as here shown. The edge of the seat is carved, a practice found only in the most elaborate examples. In Figure 323, the panels contained in the splats of the back and that of the stretcher placed below the seat are veneered; these were also embellished at times with an inlay pattern. The eagle crowning the decoration of the back is evidently of symbolic significance. The elaborate Venetian example succeeding, while of the same arrangement, shows a variation of the more common rectangular panels placed in more ornate splats, while the front legs and the upright members of the back are also carved.

Figure 324 illustrates one of the finer models with intarsia-ornamented panels, while the one that accompanies it shows the raised panel work of later character. In those illustrated on the succeeding page are other variations of this type, dating from about 1550 to 1570.



FIG. 342. CARVED WOOD FRAME. VENETIAN, SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

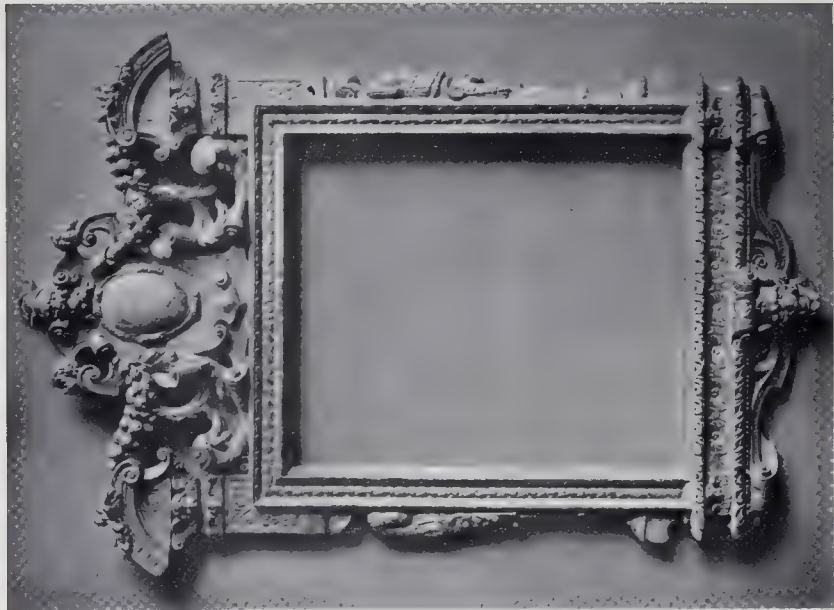


FIG. 344. CARVED WOOD FRAME
SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE



FIG. 343. CARVED AND GILDED FRAME
LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

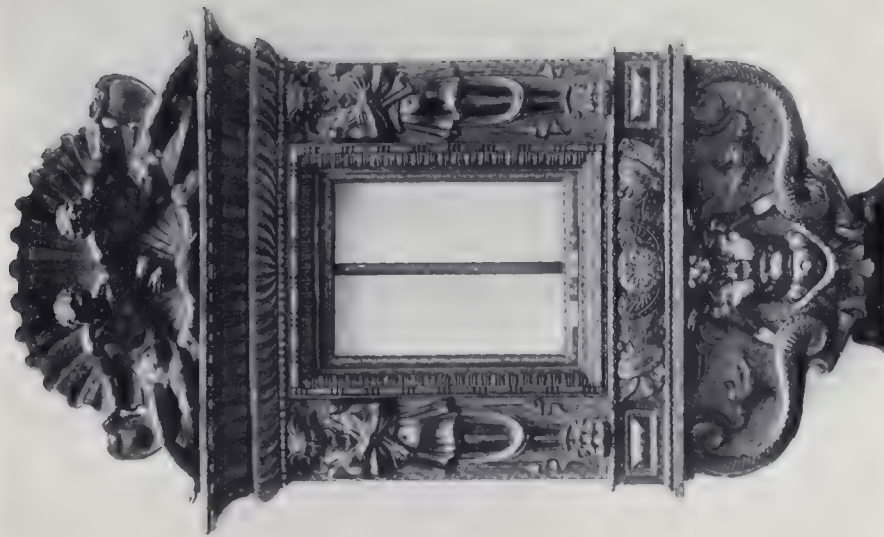


FIG. 345. MIRROR FRAME, WALNUT AND GOLD, VENETIAN
SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

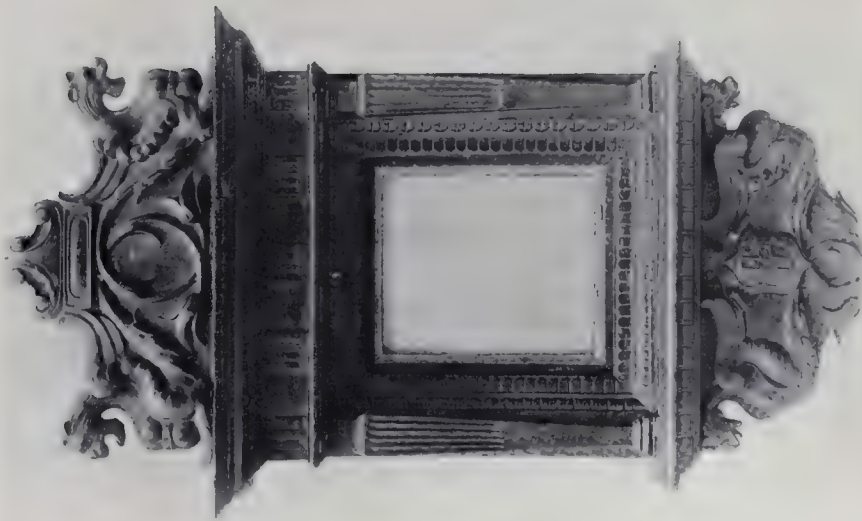


FIG. 346. MIRROR FRAME, FLORENTINE
SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

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FIG. 347. CARVED WOOD LANTERN. VENETIAN, ABOUT 1570
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

Though the sgabelli, like the chairs of X form, became less numerous as the century advanced, they are found among the most elaborate chairs of the period. Like the cassapanca, they seem to have been the medium through which the baroque carver gave vent to his most vehement fancies and decorative orgies. Most examples that we have of these date from the first part of this period, of



FIG. 348. CARVED WOOD CANDLESTICKS, GOLD AND POLYCHROME
SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

ITALIAN FURNITURE



FIG. 349. CARVED WOOD CANDLESTICK. FIRST HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
COURTESY OF P. W. FRENCH & CO., NEW YORK CITY

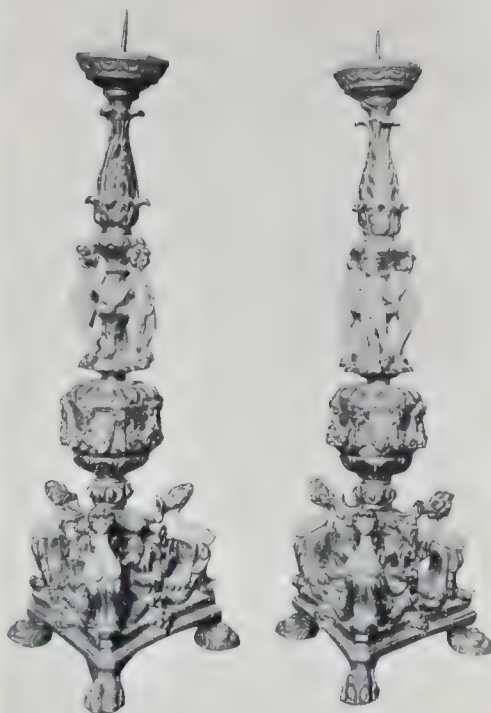


FIG. 350. CARVED WOOD CANDLESTICKS, GOLD AND POLYCHROME. SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE BARDINI COLLECTION, FLORENCE

these Figures 328, 329, and 330 are highly representative. While of the same general form and structure as those of the earlier period, they are excessively ornamented with all the then-prevailing motifs. Figure 328, an Umbrian interpretation, has a lyre-shaped front support ending in dolphins, a motif commonly

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found in decorations from this section. Their voluted tails support a guilloche mould and rosette form, below which is placed the popular cartouche motif. The sides of the shaped back are outlined with scrolls supporting a cresting formed of similar motifs of interrupted line, while in the centre of the whole the cartouche motif is repeated. Figure 329, of about the same date, shows the same consistency in design. The lower part is outlined with curved forms, carved with a foliated scroll ending in lion feet; these support a fluted frieze and enclose a grotesque head, while the back, formed of similar motifs, is crowned with a cresting similar to that of the foregoing. Though the following example has the fan-shaped back of the more beautiful forms of the High Renaissance, the ornamentation of its front support outlined with grotesque winged figures ending in lion feet, the coarse and

unpleasant grotesque mask that they enclose, as well as the figures that outline the back, were unknown to the designer of that period. The chairs represented in Figure 331 are all characteristic of the debased designs of this period.

Two chairs of ecclesiastical origin known as faldstools, are shown in Figures 334 and 335. Their frames are of wrought iron, and the turned parts



FIG. 351. CARVED WOOD AND GILDED
CANDLESTICKS
FROM THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON

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are of brass. Both date from the end of the period. On the round finial of Figure 337 is engraved, "Celsus Americus Turcus. A Senis Romanus Abbaa 1601+D," an authoritative date.

Though practically no change is seen in the form of the Dante chairs and Savonarola chairs of the Late Renaissance, the same tendency toward over-



FIG. 352. CARVED AND GILDED CANDLESTICKS. LATE XVI CENTURY
FROM THE ORSELLI COLLECTION, NEW YORK CITY

elaboration is evident. In the last decade of the sixteenth and in the first years of the seventeenth century, however, they were sometimes seen with much higher backs, occasionally formed of two carved or plain horizontal splats. In some cases the backs were upholstered. Figure 336 shows the front of the structure carved with a band of decoration and the outer sides of its arms as well, while at the intersection of the two front constructional members is placed an over-scaled grotesque head. The arms terminate in a scroll with rosettes, acanthus leaves being placed where they flow from the back, much in the manner of those of the High Renaissance.

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Other folding chairs, of similar structure dating from this period, are pictured in Figure 337. These were usually of simple character, and were invariably covered with leather. Though often called barbers' chairs, they probably came from some ecclesiastical or public institution.

Frames of this period, though of a highly ornate nature, are superb expressions of the wood-carver's craft. Those of rectangular form pictured in Figures 338 and 339 have carved decoration of most intricate and delicate design applied, like the moulds that band it, to the plain surface of the frame. Both coming from Venetia they manifest her preference for a more evenly scaled arrangement of rhythmic motifs. In Figure 342 is another Venetian model composed of carved and pierced decoration combined with more architectural motifs, displaying in her most exaggerated baroque manner a less coarse and vulgar type of grotesque. Of similar design and of contemporary date is the small mirror frame preceding (Figure 341).

Two fine wall mirror frames of slightly earlier date are illustrated in Figures 345 and 346. They both incorporate the then-prevailing motifs in the highest degree. The former of these is of Venetian origin and shows a preference for the rectangular form over that of the earlier round ones, in these designs of more architectural character. The moulds are richly carved, especially those of the cornice supported on pilasters with grotesque figures and the whole is surmounted by a shell forming a background for two figures of the finest modelling. The accompanying one is of similar design. Partly fluted and tapering pilasters support a triglyph frieze surmounted by a cresting composed of winged grotesques.

Venetian baroque forms are beautifully displayed in the elaborately carved and gilded wood hanging lantern illustrated in Figure 347. At the canted corners are a sort of caryatid ending in a volute hung with garlands of flowers. These appear to support a moulded and dentellated cornice breaking around the canted corners. The lights are framed with Sansovino forms while the dome-like top is rich with riotous ornament and putti.

Candlesticks survive in numbers from the late sixteenth century. They are generally of ecclesiastical origin and show an elaborate treatment of prevailing

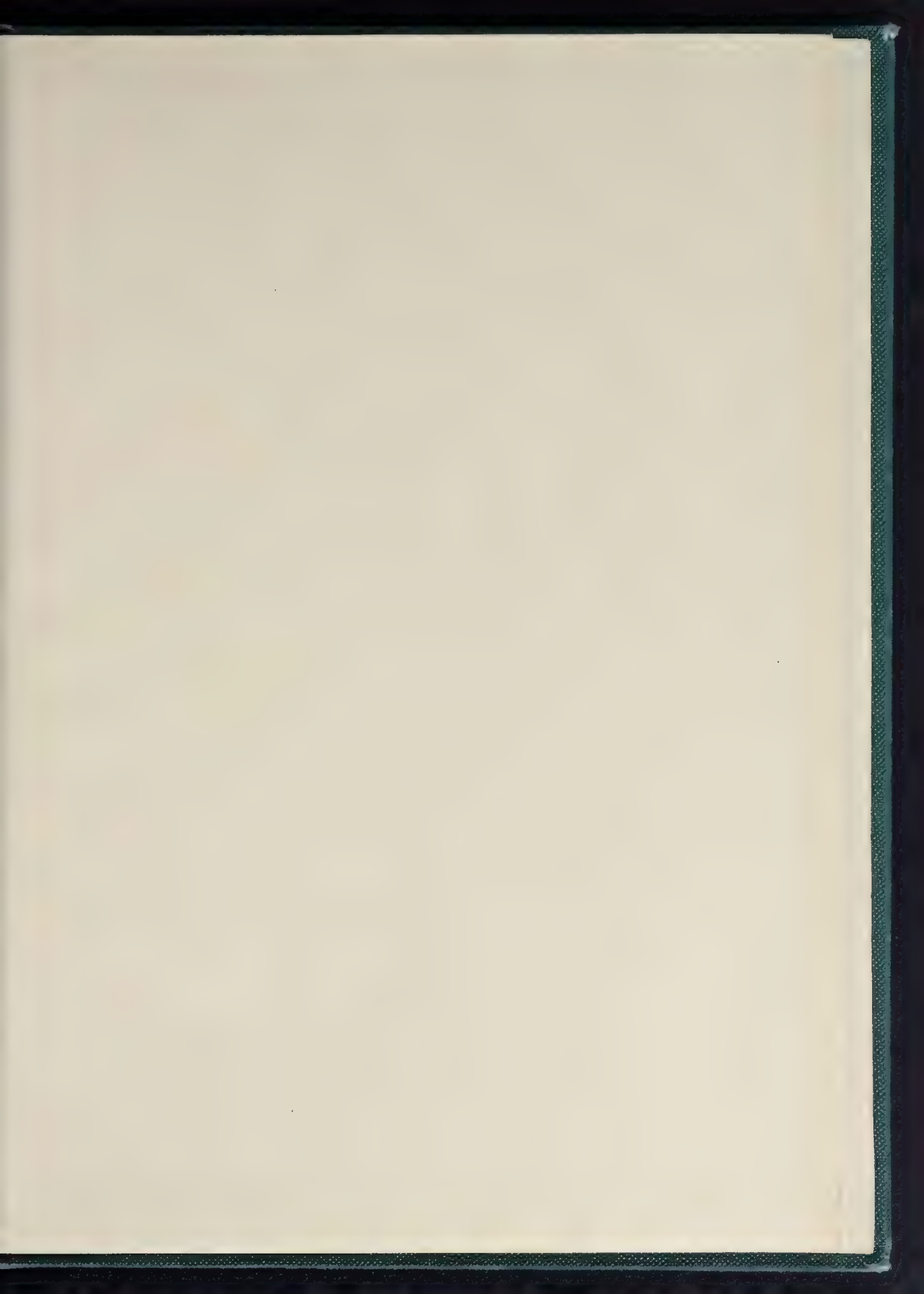
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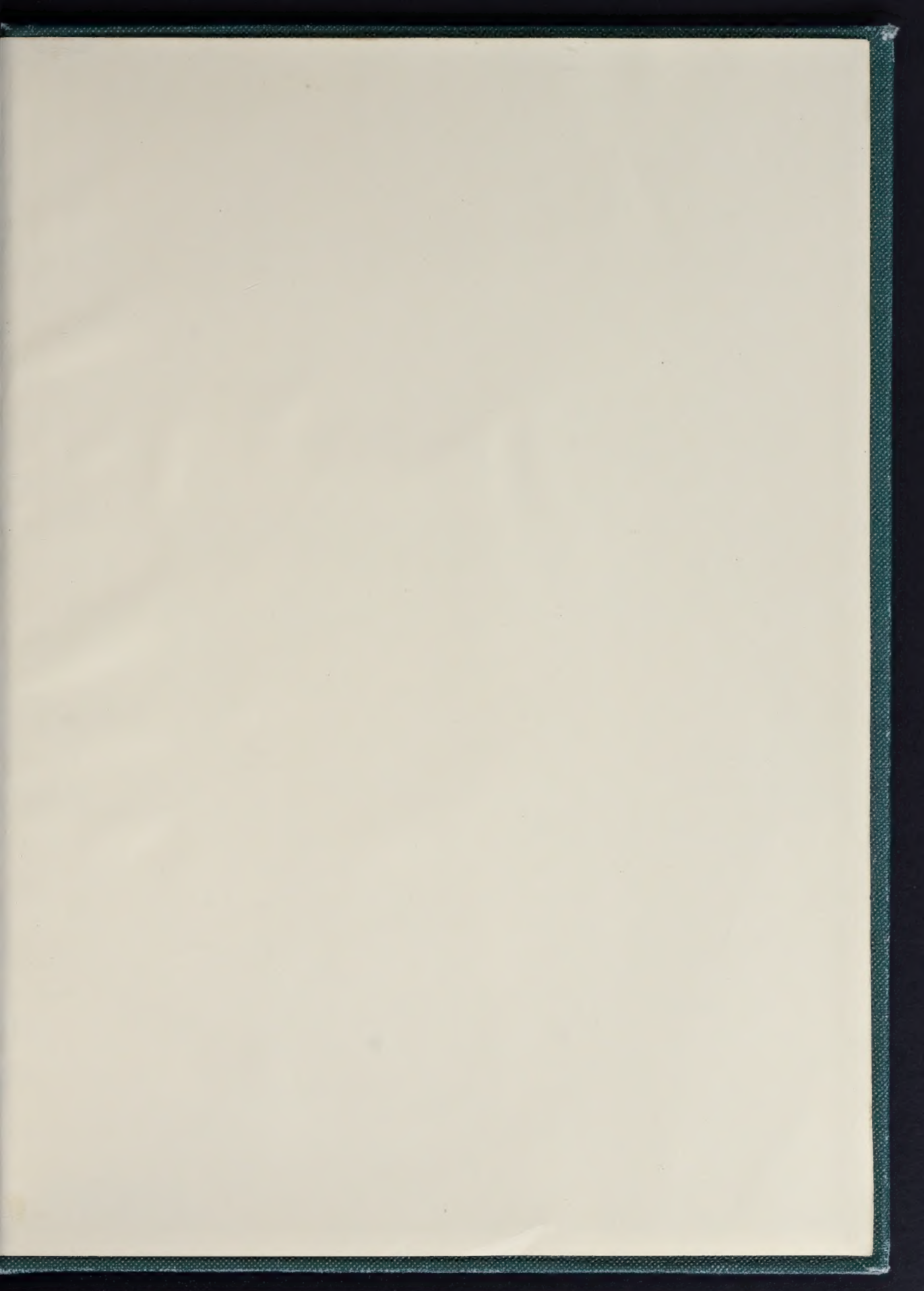
motifs of the period. Those shown in Figure 348 are among the most elaborate specimens of the period, being over six feet in height. The figures are painted in naturalistic tones while the remaining parts are gilded. The tier upon tier of grotesque figures combined with volutes, the curved forms outlining the bases as well as the winged figures at its angles are all familiar motifs of this epoch.

Variety is shown in Figures 349, 350, and 351. Of these 349 is of earlier design as its motifs are representative of those of the preceding period. The base recalls the antique forms so profusely copied before the sway of the baroque, while the forms that compose the shaft are of a higher order than are those seen in the accompanying compositions. The background of the base is painted dark green, its ornament and the shaft being gilded. Figure 350 is of about the same date as those illustrated in Figure 348. The figures are polychromed in the same manner and the other parts are gilded. Figure 351 is a more uncommon design, yet the square bases, the form of the shaft, and the ornamentation of the whole have a decided character of mid-sixteenth century design. Simpler examples are seen in the smaller ones illustrated in Figure 352. Carved and gilded, they are of characteristic form with equally characteristic ornamentation.



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